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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Barr Ferree, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the publisher of

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BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.

No. MCCXLII. APRIL 1919. Vol. CCV.

OBSTRUCTION'S GENTLE ART.

BY DOUGLAS WALSHE.

POST-MORTEMS are always an unsatisfactory business and of little assistance to the corpse; so, although it may be true that, if the Salonica Expedition had landed only one month earlier, Serbia might have been saved, it is no use considering that question now. Nor is it proposed to discuss the necessity or otherwise of this unpopular side-show, or even so much as to refer to the Berlin-Baghdad railway. The expedition having been decided upon, it is intended simply to narrate the manner of its beginnings. As Greece is now a trusted Ally and Constantin is no longer on the throne, it seems a pity that a franker and fuller version of a story unique in military history and so rich in entertainment should not be given to the world.

I.

Britain in War is notoriously a Bad Starter. Hypnotised by a phrase, she has come to pride herself upon her ability to muddle through. To make a mess, and then after much labour and sacrifice to clear it up, is supposed to be some peculiar British virtue denied to the rest of the world.

At 11 A.M. on September 30, 1915, five lost sheep in khaki and two naval officers stood on the quay at Salonica, and wondered what the deuce was going to happen next. H.M.S. *Scourge* had just dumped them there to start the Salonica campaign.

They had no proper instructions as to their appointments. Their general orders were to

prepare for the eventual arrival of five Divisions of British troops, part to be withdrawn from the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and the remainder sent direct from home. More definite orders, they had been informed, would be awaiting them with the British Consul. And that was all they knew about it.

Nobody in authority took any notice of them. The heavens did not fall, the trams continued to run along the front, the quaintly-coloured caiques from the Islands went on unloading at the quay, and Greek and German officers unconcernedly finished their drinks at Floca's little tables. The sun shone on the big white buildings and the blue sea. Hard though it may be to realise it now that it has been dirtied by overmuch traffic and devastated by fire, the front, with the tall white minarets in the background, was then an admirable setting for a gay and fascinating scene. Colour and movement were everywhere. Dapper Greek officers in brand-new uniforms; women in many-hued native garments or last year's Parisian fashions just a little soiled; bearded Jews, any one of whom might have sat as a model for the conventional Shylock; "Macedonskis" in dirty-white smocks, baggy breeches, and scarlet sashes stolidly leading ox-carts and donkeys, oddly reminiscent of cheap illustrated editions of the Bible—none of these bestowed more than a passing glance at that little group of strangers, or dreamed what an influx of men and gold they heralded.

Brigadier-General Hamilton, Lieut.-Colonel Striedinger, A.D.S.T., Lieut.-Colonel Malcolm, D.S.O., G.S.O.; Major Sowerby, Egyptian Railways, and Major Salmon, Interpreter, represented the Army, with Captain Mitchell, R.N., and Lieutenant Packenham, R.N.R., for the Navy.

In two ramshackle gharries the Mission proceeded to the Consulate, leaving their batmen and their baggage on the quay.

The Consul was on leave; the Vice-Consul had only heard of their coming an hour before, and had no orders for them.

There they were, stranded—in uniform—in a neutral country under strong German influence—liable to be interned—out of touch with their own Government—and with a tremendous amount of work to do and no right to do it. The humblest Greek sous-lieutenant with pro-German leanings could have bagged the lot and created a nice political pother that might probably have turned out a blessing in disguise. It was thus, as the Parliamentarians would put it, that Britain unsheathed the sword, and it was fortunate that these five forerunners were able to appreciate something of the humours of their irritating situation. As usual, their country had done the wrong thing with the right men.

They knew their job. A gigantic labour lay before

them. Casually, between a sleep and a sleep, they had dropped in for the astoundingly complicated business of mothering a modern army. They were there to organise camps and Base Headquarters; to report on and arrange railway and dock facilities; to contract for supplies of all descriptions and provide transport; and to be in a position to receive British troops, handle them, house them, and feed them—at probably ten minutes' notice or none at all.

Undaunted, though unaccredited, they got quietly to work without a moment's delay, their first act being to bluff the Greek sentry in a hopelessly illegal manner and examine the facilities of the port. They then turned their attention to the railways—and promptly found themselves arrested by a Greek policeman for trespassing. It looked as if the fat were already in the fire, but fortune favoured them. They were taken before a railway official who luckily happened to be a Belgian, and consequently a strong Ally. He released them.

The rest of an eventful day was spent in making discoveries, one of the earliest being how very wide in matters commercial a Macedonian can open his mouth when he has the chance—a discovery we all had many opportunities later of confirming.

Three other discoveries during the day are eloquent of what the resources of Salonica amounted to at this period. There were no telephones; there were only four motor-cars in the place; and no maps could be purchased in any of the shops. This last was a very serious matter. It is easier to make bricks without straw than to start a war without maps—and, of course, they had no maps of their own! Their very British intention had been to obtain some from the Greek General Staff; but the lack of credentials made it out of the question to attempt to get into touch with them. However, this was a Mission not easily discouraged or defeated. A map was obtained—one precious, ancient map. Doubtless our American Allies will be interested to hear that the spade-work of the Salonica campaign was started by the aid of a map borrowed from the local depot of the Standard Oil Company.

Time was the essence of their contract. There was a great deal of work to be done and not a minute to lose, because nobody knew how soon the troops might begin to arrive. As a matter of fact, time was even more precious than they suspected in their ignorance of the military and political situation. Troops were being hastily gathered together and were to come flooding upon them earlier than they dreamed.

Besides being sent to a neutral country in uniform and without maps or credentials, these officers were also sent without money. Though war is easily the most expensive business in the world, none of them had a farthing of public

money to begin it with. As a measure of precaution, with no idea of possible requirements and naturally expecting that a proper paymaster would be duly appointed, a letter was sent by the *Scourge*, which returned that night, asking for fifty pounds, and also for six motor-cars. Fortunately the paymaster—"Medforce"—was a man of discernment and initiative. He promptly wired back £10,000. Not many men can have had the experience of asking for fifty pounds and getting ten thousand. One can picture the recipient at first astonished and amused—and then annoyed. For obviously the meaning was that to his other multifarious duties was now to be added a financial responsibility which he ought not to have been called upon to assume.

That same evening Brigadier-General Hamilton prepared a wire asking for 120 lorries, 2 field butcheries and bakeries, and many other things. But even this could not go off, as the only means of communication, a French cruiser, had already left to try to pick up Lemnos from out at sea. She had always to do this, her wireless having only a very limited range. Naturally it added much to the difficulties of this hole-in-a-corner Mission that this was all the facilities they had for communicating with the outside world. A visit to this cruiser on her return established the fact that the French, who had sent a similar Mission, had left theirs in the same position as ours as to lack of official status. But where they had undoubtedly gone one better was in sending their representatives in civilian garb.

Even such a trifling matter as obtaining office accommodation proved difficult. A house was searched for, but (enterprising British house agents please note!) there were no house agents, and houses were never advertised to let. The Greek mobilisation was proceeding with a lack of enthusiasm only too apparent, with, indeed, about as much enthusiasm as system. But this mobilisation provided the pro-Germans and obstructionists with a very handy and convenient trump-card. Again and again, when on the point of coming to terms for a Base Headquarters, the deal was crabbed by the arrival of an official with the information that that particular building was part of the mobilisation scheme. This, however, is anticipating a little.

Next morning an offer was made to let the Mission a small hotel of eighteen rooms for £380 per month—only about five guineas per room per week! More reasonable accommodation, however, was found after a day or two. Every one was up to his eyes in work, selecting, among other things, camp sites for troops and Supply Depots, and attempting to purchase forage and wood. The A.S.C., indeed, requested a local agent to make it known that they were "prepared to do a deal in almost anything"—so amazingly comprehensive

nowadays are the needs of an army.

H.M.S. *Doris* arrived with no news and no orders, and the newspapers began to get busy. Muddling up Brigadier-General Hamilton with General Sir Ian Hamilton, it was gravely announced that "It is confirmed that General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-French Army in the Orient, arrived at Salonica the day before yesterday. He was accompanied by all his staff, composed of superior English and French officers."

Finally, as a sort of last straw to their load of difficulties—not a tenth part of which it is possible to indicate—the British Ambassador at Athens wired to the Mission that their unexpected arrival was having a bad effect politically, and they had better leave as early as possible. A council of war was immediately held. The situation was becoming so intolerable that the advisability of withdrawing had to be debated. But British pertinacity won the day. It was decided, though not quite unanimously, that they had been sent there by the War Office, and could not take orders to depart from any one else. The Ambassador was requested to repeat his message home, and as a result, at 11 P.M. that evening, the Mission found itself recognised at last. The Greek Government made a formal protest, and folded its arms—and the Royalists, no doubt, winked at each other complacently. They knew the game they meant to play.

But surely never before has any country sent out a Military Mission to start a War, and that Mission been ordered home by its country's Ambassador?

One can only surmise that Lord Kitchener had acted on his own, and that the Foreign Office, having no information, could not instruct its representative. The only other possible explanation is, that the Ambassador was putting up a bluff, because the political situation was so delicate and dangerous that he had to pretend either not to know or to disapprove of what was going on. If that is the case, he was transgressing an elementary law common both to Diplomacy and to Bridge—finessing against his partner. Supposing the Mission had taken his advice? What then?

II.

They were recognised, and it was possible now to go openly to work. But it was not long before they discovered that this by no means meant that things were going to go smoothly. A visit in the morning to a comrade of the French Mission, at some offices he had hired near the quay, opened their eyes as to the sort of thing they were in for. It seemed that at 5 P.M. on the previous day, after he had

landed a few men, and was making them comfortable for the night, a Greek armed party arrived and turned them out bag and baggage. The Greeks occupied the offices themselves, and the French spent the night at their Consulate. It was quite clear that the King's party did not intend to take things lying down. But the Allies could only grin and bear it. Their orders were to be conciliatory at all costs, and even included a command to salute every Greek officer, whatever his rank.

The British turn came next. Brigadier-General Hamilton decided that our troops should be camped to the south-east of the town, and all arrangements were planned in accordance with that decision. Suddenly the Greeks announced that they needed that particular site for themselves—and the Mission had to select another one north-west.

There was a gentleman named Colonel Messalas, the Greek Base Commandant at Salonica, whom the Mission will remember long after the malarial microbes have departed from their blood. He was quite nice to look at, and his manners were politeness itself. Outwardly he was one of the most charming of men, but inwardly he was a very genius in the arts of deceit, espionage, and obstruction. Later he was deported, but for a long time he had things all his own way. Pin-prick after pin-prick he jabbed in with a delightful smile—and sent a full report to Germany every week.

One of his best efforts was concerned with a big farm at a place called Topsin. On October 6 this was hired for the purposes of being turned into a Base Hospital, and a couple of hundred tons of hay on the premises were bought at the same time. A deposit of 1250 francs was paid on the rent; and on the 8th the Greeks calmly requisitioned the farm for themselves. Inwardly fuming, but openly smiling, the harassed authorities consented to the earnest-money standing as part payment for the hay, which was to be sent in by rail. On the 12th, 3500 francs were advanced to the owner for a fortnight's rail charges for delivery, and on the 14th we were politely informed that the Greek Government had now forbidden the removal of the hay as well. The military attaché was appealed to, but nothing could be done, except to place the question of the return of the money advanced in the hands of the solicitor to the British Consulate.

There was also the comic-opera incident of the triple-sentried barn. The contents of a large barn were purchased outright at a good stiff Macedonian price. Then one day the contractor came along "with the wind up." The Greek Government, he declared, had threatened to imprison him unless the keys were produced in half an hour! The representative of Britain's Might, who had pos-

session of the keys, accompanied by an armed guard, hurried to the scene, and found that the door had already been broken down and a Greek sentry posted. A British sentry was also posted, and then a French officer arrived, accompanied by a guard, which he, too, proceeded solemnly to post. It appeared that the hay had been sold first to the British, and then to the French—for cash, and finally commandeered by the Greeks. Unfortunately for the gaiety of nations, no triangular duel *à la* "Midshipman Easy" took place. The Greeks got the hay.

Possibly the presence of these unwelcome Allied officers added a little extra bitterness to the Royalists' appetisers at Flocа's, the principal café in the Place de la Liberté; but with one train a day running direct to Constantinople, and Colonel Messalas in authority at the port, the situation must have afforded them considerable secret entertainment.

No means of annoyance was neglected, big or little. The French were forced to camp on a particularly unhealthy spot. The Greek army was encamped between us and the enemy, and strong control-posts were established in every direction, beyond which they refused to allow our patrols to pass. They insisted on our making a weekly return of the stores landed for our troops "for customs' purposes," and even had the impudence to demand detail figures — which, needless to say, they did not get! In many petty ways they tried to sow dissension between us and the French, but there they always failed ingloriously. One instance, which resulted in an act of friendly bribery and corruption, may perhaps be recorded here. It turned out in the end that our Monastir Road Supply Depot, after all the jiggery-pokery about sites, was situated on ground finally allotted to the French. But no blood was shed. As another suitable site could not be obtained, we bought our Ally off with the loan of five motor-lorries, and for that illegal consideration were allowed to remain where we were.

Another trick, when in spite of their watchfulness a purchase had been completed, was to requisition the article in question for the Greek army direct from us. We had to submit, for undoubtedly they were within their international rights; but thanks to the give-and-take between the Allies, even this measure could be circumvented. On one occasion they requisitioned all the hay acquired with great difficulty by the French, and all the wood that we had contrived to get hold of by various roundabout means. Possibly even Tino himself and Queen Sophie heard of the matter, and smiled and rubbed their hands at the thought of the French with no fodder and the British with no wood. Perhaps they even went so far as to drink to our speedy

voyage homewards in despair. But owing to the way we were working hand in hand nothing very serious happened. The British A.D.S.T. had an interview with the French Chief Intendant, and five hundred tons of British hay were swapped for their equivalent in French wood.

There was obstruction everywhere. The personnel of the railways was practically all pro-German, and at all times everything possible, from sending unsuitable trucks to a deliberate derailment, and consequent blockage of the line, was done to hinder our movements and defeat our requirements. We were never allowed to use the Greek telegraph wires, but were always politely informed that they were needed for Government purposes; we were not allowed to place telephone lines on any Greek posts or houses; and when at last we erected a line of our own, this was deliberately tapped.

Things went even further than obstruction, for there was more than a suspicion that at one time the comitadji were being organised to murder the British and French staff in Salonica. Who was at the back of this is not known for certain, but rumour has it that on a certain night all the British and French officers discovered in the town were to have their throats slit in the best comitadji style, and for days various ferocious-looking ruffians were observed slinking into the town from the surrounding villages. The situation was met by quietly moving all the troops to the outskirts, and training every gun that would bear from our ships in the harbour on to the town on the night on which the murders were to take place. At the least sign of a riot, a pre-arranged signal would have been given to the fleet and Salonica blown to blazes. The Greek Club, the Odeon, Floca's, the Gaiety, and the White Tower, all places crowded with officers and civilians in the evening, had a carefully-sighted gun trained upon them.

There was no riot—and no more comitadji plots against the staff.

III.

It is the doubtful privilege of the A.S.C. to be first in the Field and last out. In this case that meant that all sorts of extraneous duties were thrust upon it. Besides its proper functions—heavy enough at the commencement of a campaign, and specially difficult in that atmosphere of obstruction—the A.S.C. had also to undertake the hiring of accommodation for other branches, advances of money to officers, payment of troops, purchases of Ordnance and Royal Engineers' material, and the payment of all Supply and Transport bills. There was nobody else to do

these things, so the already overwhelmed A.S.C. found itself saddled with a heavy financial responsibility and much extra labour in keeping the necessary accounts. Everything had to be paid for on the spot, and in most cases advances had to be made before delivery. As in many instances — thanks to the interference of the ever-active Colonel Messalas — delivery did not take place, in spite of the "earnest money" already received, complications were always arising, and the solicitor to the Consulate found a good deal of extra work thrust upon him.

There was trouble everywhere. Even the landing of stores was ridiculously difficult. The *Huntsfal*, an ex-German boat, was the first Supply ship in. She had on board besides her cargo, consisting chiefly of bully-beef and biscuits, a few British troops and the 273rd Depot Unit of Supply. These men practically formed the advance party of the Expedition, and, clerks and all, were promptly turned into stevedores, as no civilian labour (another pin-prick) was available. One of the holds was loaded with potatoes, which had become heated on the voyage, and most of this part of the cargo had to be dumped into the harbour.

These amateur stevedores had first to unload the ship on to barges, and then accompany the barges to the only pier, where, as no cranes were available, the boxes had to be thrown off one by one!

The goods, having been stacked on this narrow wooden jetty, were then placed on railway trucks and pushed to the road by hand—a distance of about 250 yards — as we were not allowed to hire any engines! For this the freightage was 35s. per truck — and it had to be paid. What can the man in the corner do but consent to be squeezed — and be very punctilious about his salutes! The cream of the jest, from the Greek point of view, was that we provided our own labour. We pushed the trucks ourselves, and paid 35s. for the privilege! Fleecing the Allies quickly became a popular pastime in those days. The Government gave folks a lead by raising all passenger and goods fares on the railways 7½ per cent for our special benefit!

It is difficult to know whether to call the situation farce or tragedy, so pitifully unequal was that one and only jetty to the task of landing the stores of a modern army. Each truck had to be turned by hand twice on each trip on a turntable. Goods were dumped at the end of the jetty, and carted off by such transport as could be obtained. No motor or wheeled transport had arrived, and the only vehicles obtainable — mostly long narrow ox-carts of an incredible crudity and creakiness, hired at 25s. per day — were quite incapable of coping with the work. The result was that the dump was

never cleared. It grew and grew—till at last the jetty sank under its weight!

Further difficulties were caused by the Greek mobilisation methods. They had no proper census of vehicles, and the plan adopted was to commandeer anything seen in the streets, with driver and load thrown in. British supplies were "scrounged" with the rest, and in the end an armed guard had always to be sent as escort. But naturally vehicle owners were very shy of coming out, even under British protection.

What working in such conditions was like, it is not hard to imagine. The amazing thing is that anything got done at all. Remembering the frailty of human nature, the tact and patience which avoided any open breach at a time when everybody was being cruelly overworked, and must have known how all their difficulties were being artificially increased, are worthy of the highest praise and admiration.

IV.

The landings at Salonica compare very unfavourably with those at the Dardanelles, where every detail was elaborately and successfully worked out. In spite of the fact that the troops were under fire, everything went with a smoothness and a precision that demonstrated for all time how splendidly the Navy and Army can work together when given a chance.

But the landings at Salonica, which on the face of things would appear to be a much simpler task, were a very different story. At the Dardanelles the organisation was right, and organisation in such matters is everything. At Salonica there was no organisation. The organisation did not fail; it simply never existed. No time was allowed for its creation. That curse of good soldiering, *la haute politique*, had its inconsiderate finger in the military pie.

It must have been so. No War Office, not even ours, after such a brilliant achievement as the Dardanelles landings, and with the extra knowledge and experience gained on the Peninsula, could have thrown troops about in that higgledy-piggledy fashion unless subjected to some overweening outside pressure. Apparently it was necessary for political reasons that some one should be able to stand up in the House and announce, amid decorous cheers, that at a certain moment there were a hundred thousand of our men in Greece. This meant that a hundred thousand men had to be hurled into Salonica anyhow without a moment's delay—or the right hon. gentleman would not have been speaking the truth. And that, and not bad staff-work, explains, if it does not justify, the breathless haste with which the campaign was started, and

the lack of order in which the troops were despatched. It would have been better to have lied. But statesmen are not soldiers, though they may be amateur strategists. They could not be expected to bother about how this hastily gathered army was to be fed and accommodated, or to consider the feelings of the Army Service Corps.

It was a pity, of course, but these things will happen. Granted that Parliament was restless, and granted that the need for troops was frantically urgent and much precious time had been wasted, all the same in the end a little less haste would have meant much more speed. Lack of method is a bad way of making up for lost time.

This is what happened. On the 3rd October, only three days after the Mission had landed, a wire was received that the *Albion*, with a thousand British troops, would shortly arrive. These troops were the advance party of the 10th Division, and they came on the 5th.

The actual landing of French and British troops was practically simultaneous, and among the news of the day the following amusing paragraph appeared in the local press:—

> "The Austrian and German Consuls went in the afternoon to a little headland outside the town and explored the horizon with their glasses."

It is to be regretted that there was no enterprising journalist there to report their conversation. Later they went even further. Taking advantage of the peculiar political situation and the protection of the Royalists, they ended by standing openly on the quay with note-books in their hands, frankly counting the troops as they came ashore. Nobody can blame them, of course; but what is one to say for an Allied Government that expected a successful war to be waged in such circumstances? By far the blackest chapter in the history of the Salonica expedition is the supineness of our political attitude to Greece. It was, actually, not until our Supply Depots had been bombed at the end of the year that the Allies plucked up courage enough to depart the enemy's official representatives.

However, somehow or other the *Albion's* complement was got ashore, and the rest of the Division and its stores followed in driblets on its heels, sandwiched among supply and ammunition ships. By the 28th October, in spite of all this confusion, and in spite of the deliberate congestion of the quays (a neat pin-prick that!), the arrival and disembarkation of the 10th Division was complete, except for an ammunition column lost in the *Marquette*, sunk by torpedo off Volo.

It may be observed here that to tear the 10th Division straight from the trenches at Gallipoli and plank them down in Salonica, just as they were, was undoubtedly a big political blunder. With nations as with individuals, it is the little

things that count. They were excellent material, but they showed the marks of the hard service they had seen. Many were still wearing summer helmets and shorts; many were without puttees, and quite a number had broken bayonets or none at all. Their best friends cannot describe them as anything else but disreputable-looking, and this was the Division launched into an unfriendly country at such a critical moment. Better have waited a fortnight for something spick and span and fresh from home! Undoubtedly the Greeks expected to see a trim and shining example of the Glorious British Army, of which they had heard so much. A nice new Division, which by the way is roughly eight miles long on the march, sent through the streets of Salonica, would have created a sense of respect among the Royalists, all in new uniforms themselves, and probably have led to the avoidance of much of that obstruction which so annoyingly hampered all our efforts. As it was, many of the officers of the Division themselves felt at the time that the impression made upon the Greeks by this ragbag army was that Britain was already beaten.

To return to the landings, it was the A.S.C. who suffered most for the sins of the politicians. The flurried way in which the expedition was flung at their heads created an excess of confusion and difficulty and extra work at a time when everybody from the highest to the humblest was already working at the utmost pressure. It may have been politically necessary, but disgraceful is the only possible description of the way the force arrived and landed. The fighting troops and their baggage came first; then Supplies; and last, Transport! As a consequence, very heavy expenditure was incurred which might easily have been avoided; and the A.S.C., already short of Transport, found its resources strained almost to breaking-point. And when the transport did at last arrive it was found that there was in some cases no harness for the horses!

The 22nd Division, despatched in great haste from France, arrived on the afternoon of November 5, and their first line transport vehicles were disembarked without animals or personnel. Mules had to be borrowed to take the vehicles to their camp at Galiko, seven miles out, at a time when every animal was working double tides.

A Motor Ambulance convoy blew in with fifty vehicles—for which at that time there was not the slightest use. Permission was applied for—since motor transport was worth its weight in gold just then—to paint out the Red Cross and use the vehicles as bread vans. But this was refused, although the 22nd Division had to be withdrawn from Galiko to Lembet on the 19th November owing to shortage of transport. The irony of the situation was doubled by the fact that when they sent this Motor Ambulance convoy off, the Naval

authorities, for some reason, held up two ships full of motor transport at Mudros. This was one of the very few occasions when the Army thirsted for the Navy's blood!

On the 22nd November, information was received that "units of the 27th Division had sailed." This was the first intimation that this Division was coming out at all, and serves to illustrate the uncertainty that always existed as regards the arrival of troops. The French, who were in the same boat with us, landed three times as many men in much better order. But they were not rushed and muddled by their own people as we were. However, by slavery and self-sacrifice each difficulty was met, each complication unravelled, . . . and it doesn't really matter if there was a good deal of bad language directed back across the seas. Parliament and the War Office were too far away to hear it.

Even when the horse transport arrived, it brought another trouble with it. It was useful enough round about Salonica, and did much excellent work on extremely bad and muddy roads. But as there were no roads in the campaigning district, but only mountain tracks impossible for any wheeled vehicle, obviously the crying need of the future was going to be Pack Transport. The War Office was communicated with. But the War Office said "No"—only to be forced to say "Yes" later, after further irritating delays. Somehow the British War Office will never learn to trust the man on the spot.

In one instance, when a brigade of the 22nd Division was ordered to proceed up country, having no train, a Train Company had to be improvised from what was left of the Reserve Parks, thus further depleting an already insufficient local transport.

All these things, of course, go to show with what unseemly haste the expedition was flung across the seas. Obviously all the authorities thought of or cared about was getting the troops ashore. So hurriedly were the transports sent off that hardly a ship's Manifest was correct, and it was impossible in the circumstances to check everything on disembarkation. The result was that for a long time Headquarters never knew exactly what troops and what transport had arrived. Life was a frantic rush of "fitting in," "fixing up," and "making do," and it is little short of miraculous that, in spite of all the confusion and difficulty caused by this haphazard method of despatch, things went as smoothly as they did. Needless to say, there were many changes of personnel among all grades. Such conditions are a searching test of capacity, and do not permit of any mercy being shown to the slightest hint of incompetence or unresourcefulness. Many men, excellent soldiers and organisers on ordinary lines, had to be scrapped because they were hardly up to the difficulties of such an amazing situation.

v.

The history of the Motor Transport at this period is not without interest. The first Motor Transport did not arrive until October 21, and consisted of seven lorries of 244 M.T. Company, four of which needed repair before they could be moved from the quay, and with only two motor drivers for the lot. The reception accorded them by folks ashore, tearing their hair for transport of any description, is better omitted than described. A few days later the rest of the company landed with a hundred and ten lorries all told—and no spare parts. These vehicles were all converted London General Omnibuses, which had already seen service in France and in Egypt, and were supposed to be practically worn-out when they arrived, though as a matter of fact, many of them, like Charley's Aunt, are still running.

No mercy was shown to this Company, or to 245 Company, the next to arrive. As the vehicles came off the ship, then and there the cabs and petrol-tanks, which had been removed for stowage purposes, were bolted on, and every lorry immediately set to work. And they continued working, with a double shift, twenty-four hours a day for five strenuous months!

At that time there were three Supply Depots, each run by a temporary second lieutenant, which speaks for itself as regards the shortage of personnel. Transport, too, was so short that the Divisional Supply Trains were obliged to come down to the Base and draw their own forage. Outside the Depot every day there was a string of G.S. waggons over a mile long!

The weather was our enemy all the time. It was bitterly cold and desperately wet and depressing. Three weeks' almost continuous downpour had made the dump at the railway jetty and each of the Supply Depots a foot deep in mud. Work in such circumstances was doubly arduous and disheartening. A 3-ton lorry is not the most tractable of vehicles in a foot of sticky mud.

Hard though the Transport worked, it was hopelessly insufficient. If a ship were discharged on the quay for twenty-four hours, it took forty-eight hours to clear it. And some genius among the Royalists invented a new pin-prick. Always round the Supply Depot there was a string of some fifty Greek Army mules, to whom motor transport was a new experience. Even those who remember the early days of motor-cars and the horse at home can barely imagine the rest! These were mules—pack-mules, untrammelled by carts; Macedonian mules, resentful of the presence of these strange monsters on the narrow highway. At a time when every hour was precious, the

antics of these brutes caused us the greatest inconvenience and delay. And we had to swallow our knowledge that it was neither an accident nor a coincidence that led to a daily encounter!

While on the subject of mules, it may be mentioned that a Mule Depot was formed immediately next door to our Base Supply Depot. Nobody ever settled the question as to which was the more appalling — the smell or the flies. Neither was very good for the rations.

The Depot was soon in sore need of extension. It overgrew itself so much that thousands of cases had to be stored in the road. Application was made, therefore, for the mules to be removed.

Colonel Messalas was very nice about it. A dozen animals were shifted next morning. Then nothing further happened for a fortnight, when the application was renewed.

Colonel Messalas was even nicer this time, and his subordinates positively beamed. Quite thirty animals were ostentatiously transferred next morning.

Altogether it took three months to get rid of them, and then six weeks of hard unpleasant work were required to clear away the manure.

Another transport trouble was the brigandage of some of the Greek soldiery. There was only one man on each lorry, of course, as the second driver was working on the other shift. When the lorry slowed down on a hill, a Greek soldier would spring on board and pitch off a case or two, while a comrade covered the driver with his rifle. This became so serious that the French armed their men with carbines. But the British M.T. had no rifles. They had been given up in Egypt for use in the Dardanelles. Many of the men, however, bought revolvers on their own account, which were taken away when things had quieted down, and handed into the C.Q.M.'s stores for return *après la guerre!*

There were difficulties everywhere. For one thing, there was a lack of tarpaulins, and many supplies were damaged by rain. For another, there was a grave shortage of tyres. There was no tyre-press in the country, and when renewal was absolutely necessary, the wheels had to be sent to Egypt to have the new tyres pressed on.

And all the while the weather was vile beyond words. When the Field Bakery was at last got to work, much of its first big bake was spoiled by the backs of the ovens being washed away. The Aldershot pattern supplied was useless for such weather. Perkins' Travelling Ovens were promptly demanded, but meanwhile the Field Bakery men were not exactly the happiest or most popular of mortals.

No praise can be too high for the men who toiled so strenuously and so cheerfully amid such discomfort, or lay

shivering in their damp tents at night. Beyond all question, it was largely due to the grit of the drivers of 244 and 245 M.T. Companies, who slithered day and night over those muddy nightmares of roads, that the heavily-handicapped Salonica army ever got off from the starting-post for that hopeless race to Serbia at all.

VI.

Amid a welter of mud and obstruction, hampered by insufficient personnel and vehicles, the A.S.C. had to cater for an army of ever-increasing numbers. Munitions had also to be handled, and likewise a thousand and one other things that are part of a modern army in the Field. There were only the worst of roads, the poorest of facilities, and all the time their work was hindered by the furtive hostility of Colonel Messalas and his merry men at a time when every minute was of value. Yet in spite of all this, the army never actually went wanting, though the possibility of running dangerously short of supplies weighed on the A.S.C. like a nightmare during the whole of this period.

At the end of November supplies of tea, jam, and sugar ran very low owing to the arrivals of new troops without rations. In one instance a transport came in with troops supposed to be carrying twenty days' landing rations. Actually the men had to be issued with four days' rations while still on board!

Frequently there was only two days' stock of essentials in hand, and on more than one occasion there was nothing available for the morrow. In the middle of October instructions were received from the Military Attaché that no more local purchases of food-stuffs were to be made, and that the Greek Government would not ratify any bargains, the delivery of which had not been completed. This meant that the feeding of the force must be wholly dependent on supply ships, and by the middle of December the feeding strength was 90,000 men and 25,000 horses.

All the time there was a petrol shortage. Loans were obtained from the French on several occasions, and the whole of the available stock in Salonica was purchased from the Standard Oil Company. The circumstances of this transaction are rather amusing. Mr Smith, the Standard Company's chief representative, was always our friend. When it was reported to him that the Obstructionists objected to him selling his stock to us, that they meant to commandeer it for themselves, and had placed sentries at the doors of his depot to prevent any more being delivered to us, like a good American he merely said "'sthat so?" Then he spat reflectively at the mantelpiece.

(Of course he doesn't spit, really, and there wasn't any mantelpiece—but it's the sort of story that demands to be told like that!)

Our Main Supply Depot was immediately behind his warehouse. So, knowing the greatness of our need, he arranged for his men quietly to push the whole of his stock over the wall on to our premises. All day long the work went on—while the Greek pro-German emissaries solemnly stood guard in front to make sure that the British were not getting any petrol!

On the 26th December, however, the supply was entirely exhausted. But luckily the next day the *Cazo Bonito* arrived with 50,000 gallons.

It ought to be clear by now that the promises of the opening words of this article have been rigidly adhered to. Nothing has been said about the Berlin-Baghdad railway—and there hasn't been a word about the fighting. Of course in the days under review there wasn't any. There was only an army getting ready in the mud and the cold, and when an army is getting ready, naturally the A.S.C. from the nature of its duties comes more to the front than usual. That is why this account has become of necessity mainly an A.S.C. chronicle.

The A.S.C. stands in no need of advertisement. Rightly the glory of war is for the man who fights. The A.S.C.'s proudest testimonial is the fact that all the Army pulls its leg. Whom Tommy loves he "chips"! The record of the A.S.C. in this war has been a very fine one; it was not made the R.A.S.C. for nothing. And so far as the Salonica campaign is concerned, it "made good" in spite of home-confusion and local obstruction and difficulty, with an efficiency, adaptability, and foresight of which it may well feel a little proud.

DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

To those who have spent long months among the snows of the Alps, the words "going down" have a magic all their own. During the winter the exhilaration of the clear air, the brilliance of the sunshine, and the stillness of the mountain solitudes hold one as by a spell. But now March was here; and the sensation of quickened vitality which spring inspires in every living creature was tingling in my veins, and brought with it an unconquerable restlessness. Looking down into the valley 4000 feet below, one knew that nature was there breaking into all its vernal beauty. White violets would be peeping from crannies in the vineyard walls, and the almond-trees, blushing fresh and fair, would be gladdening the otherwise barren fields.

The charm of our life, perched as we were upon a ledge overhanging the world, suddenly failed in attractiveness, and in its place sprang up a desire for life and movement — for the sights and sounds of a town, for the cry of the newsvendors, the crack of whips, or the clang of the tram-bells in the streets.

The pleasure-seekers and the sport enthusiasts had left us long before, and the hotel visitors had shrunk to a little band consisting for the most part of invalids and those who bore them company. To us who still remained the question of how much longer the frost would hold was of paramount interest, and we asked each other almost daily, "Have you made any plans about going down?"

Around us as yet there was small sign of spring; the scene looked as wintry as at Christmas. Snow enveloped the landscape, glittering brilliantly in the sunshine, or lying grey-white in the shade. Pines and larches alone emerged, and stood in irregular clusters of greenish blackness, their gloom heightened by contrast with their surroundings. These gnarled and twisted trees, firmly rooted among the rocks, appeared so ancient and so weather-beaten that one wondered whether youth could ever have been theirs. The characteristic features in these high altitudes are curiously uniform—a study in three colours: the vivid whiteness of the slopes, the sombre tint of the firs, and, above and embracing all, the glorious blue of the heavens.

Let no one think of snow as lifeless or monotonous. With the exception of the sea, nothing in nature reflects the moods of the elements so vividly. It lies silver in the moonlight, gleams like fairy crystals under the stars, takes on a warm look from the glow of the sun, flushes in the crimson of sunset, or remains dead and shadowless beneath a threatening sky. Its tex-

ture, too, varies with the atmospheric conditions; its changes are endless, its wonders unsurpassed; and to those who live amidst it, it becomes in the end almost as companionable as fields and pastures.

Nor are these solitary regions as devoid of animal life as is commonly supposed. The wild creatures hide themselves cunningly enough from the intruding mortal, but, for those who have eyes to see, indications of their presence abound; and no more fascinating pastime can be imagined than tracing the marks they leave upon the betraying snow.

It is easy to describe the stealthy tracks of a fox, or to speak of the lace-like tracery left by a rat; but who can adequately depict the marvels of the frost itself, whose chill breath creates the wondrous scene? Who can picture the gleam of the icicles? No pen can portray the fantasy of the hoar-frost; nor can the artist's brush reproduce the exquisite workmanship of the snow-flowers. The delicacy of these fairy forms, whose filigree construction will dissolve at a breath, is finer than that of the frailest blossom. And yet . . . and yet . . . now that spring is here, I would give all these elusive silver petals for one primrose from the lowlands, or exchange the mysterious hush of the upper air for the song of a thrush at sundown.

But the season to which we were looking forward so eagerly was not hailed with equal joy by all. Our hotel proprietor had been more or less indifferent to the weather while sure of his visitors. Now, however, he developed a persuasive eloquence on the subject of the thaw—that dreaded moment that would empty his house. The frost, he confidently informed us daily, would hold for two or three weeks yet, probably a month; such cases were known. There were clear indications—though these were never cited—that the break would prove exceptionally late this year. This, he averred, was a dangerous month, and melancholy instances of those who had "gone down" too early were recalled. We should remember "*ce pauvre Monsieur Bompard*," who, beguiled by the March sunshine of the previous year, had descended to the plain at a perilously early date. "*C'était bien vite fini pour lui! Mais que voules-vous?*" he would conclude, with a pitying shrug at the unreasonableness of hotel visitors.

It was therefore in an almost apologetic tone that I informed the solemn-faced lady presiding in the *Bureau* that I should be leaving in five days' time.

"*C'est dommage*," was the only reply my pronouncement elicited. But within half an hour the news that No. 17 had given notice had spread to the entire staff of the hotel. The chambermaid yearned over me with a sudden affection; the head waiter could scarcely refrain from more than brotherly attentions; while the hall-

porter, all aglow with interest in my movements, handed me my correspondence with a deferential awe remarkably foreign to his usual behaviour. Though annoyed at first by these transparent assiduities, I soon smiled at the recollection of a similar state of mind in school-days, when a generous uncle, uninteresting enough during his visits, sprang, on the eve of his departure, to unwonted importance in my eyes. The traits in human nature do not vary greatly, it would seem, with class or nationality.

The momentous day dawned at last. My luggage, lashed to a baggage-sleigh, had been despatched at an early hour, to ensure its getting over the snow while the night frost held. As I entered the familiar *salle-à-manger* for a last breakfast, I realised with surprise how attached I had become to my surroundings. Those already seated at table seemed interested in my journey, and all prophesied a delightful day. A little gathering of visitors and servants assembled to bid me *bon voyage*. After much hand-shaking and many good wishes, I started off—with inevitably lightened pockets.

The walk before me was of no ordinary nature. To descend 4000 feet in a few hours is a notable experience at this time of year, when, leaving snow still piled up to the first-floor windows, one finds spring reigning in the valley. In the lowlands it had been a winter of continual snowstorms and intervening thaws; but with us these falls had merely meant one more layer on the already heavily-burdened earth. This ever-increasing load gradually pinned to the ground the lower branches of the pines, where they had remained firmly embedded for many weeks. But now as, under the sun's warmth, the load began to lessen, one of these would leap into the air, released without the slightest warning, and scatter its imprisoning burden abroad. A branch thus freed will shake itself, almost like an animal exulting in its new-found liberty, before resuming its normal position. More than once I came in for one of these unexpected snow douches in the forest, through which the road passed on the first part of the descent.

After a time the walking became difficult. The partial thaw had honeycombed the snow to a treacherous extent: at one spot the surface held, at the next I floundered through it ankle-deep. To walk on the bank piled up by the snow-ploughs brought equal risks; here, too, one got a firm foothold for a few steps, and then sank in deeper than ever. There was nothing for it but to plod on as best I could.

After a while a felled pine-tree by the wayside tempted me to rest. The day was one of extreme beauty. The unclouded sky was, to the north, of the deepest blue, against which the slopes glittered white

and pure. But to the south the colour was of softer and more tender hue; while the sun, riding in his glory, seemed, by the very intensity of his own light, to blanch that portion of the heavens in which he shone in splendour. On the farther side of the valley rose immense buttresses of rock, the foothills of the Alpine giants which towered above them—

". . . the strong foundations of the earth
Where torrents have their birth."

It was only now, when I was about to lose sight of these magnificent peaks, my companions for so long, that I realised how much they had come to mean to me, and I experienced a sense of personal loss on gazing at them for the last time.

Just below my halting-place I came to the spot where sleigh-runners must needs give way to wheel traffic, and the road on either side was lined with ramshackle conveyances dilapidated almost past belief. Anything more forlorn than this collection of battered vehicles stranded by the wayside can hardly be imagined. The method adopted is simple. Starting from the valley, a man drives his carriage as far as wheels will take it; then he transfers his passengers, his baggage, and his horses to the waiting sleigh, left unceremoniously to take care of itself since the last descent, and continues his journey on runners. The point at which this change is necessarily must necessarily vary with the state of the roads: in autumn and spring it is high up on the mountain-side, but in mid-winter lies almost in the valley.

The going now became steadily worse. I had read in some book of Arctic travel of the delight which explorers experience on first treading on *terra firma* after months upon the ice, and of their satisfaction in crunching the pebbles underfoot. I had imagined some such pleasure would be mine once I was past the snow. But the quagmire of slush seemed never-ending, though at each bend of the zigzagging road the surface turned a little less white and a little more brown—a little less snow and a little more mud—until at last the former looked merely like whipped cream dissolving on a cup of chocolate.

As I made my way through this sea of mud, I became aware that some one was following me. Looking round, I discovered a little peasant girl at my heels, scrutinising me with the interest of one who seldom sees a stranger. Each time I turned, her eyes were fixed upon me with a grave curiosity. But although this quaint little maiden stared in such an unabashed manner, she apparently felt no desire for companionship, and answered my "*bon jour*" with brevity. The solemnity of the mountain child [illegible] marked in her bearing. [illegible] and constant work [illegible] mortals of the [illegible] sponsibility of

childhood, turns them into miniature men and women, wise beyond their years. My sturdy little friend was dressed in the usual manner. A clean, though patched, blue-and-white overall; a worsted cross-over, primly fastened behind; hand-knitted stockings and wooden-soled boots composed her outfit. Her head was covered by a red handkerchief tied under the chin, and her straight flaxen hair, braided into two plaits, bobbed up and down on either side of her *hotte*—the Swiss basket carried on the shoulders. With characteristic contrariness, seeing her thus reserved, I felt a desire to converse, and after walking together for some distance, I asked her name.

"Elise," was the brief reply; and in answer to a further question, she vouchsafed to add that she was ten years of age. I noticed that her basket was covered with a spotless linen cloth, and asked her what it contained. To this I got no answer, but she volunteered the information that she was going to see her uncle in the valley to "*lui faire une certaine commission.*"

"Surely you are not going all the way down?" I exclaimed in surprise.

"*Pourquoi pas?*" came the stolid rejoinder. Then silence fell again. Looking at the stunted little figure as she marched so sedately to "make her commission," I wondered what English parents would send off their ten-year-old on a like journey with no thought of any possibility of mishap.

Presently I tried again. "Have you any sisters?"

"No, no sisters."

"Nor brothers?"

After a moment's pause she admitted with seeming reluctance—

"*Il y a bien le petit frère.*"

"And *le petit frère*, how old is he?"

"Two days."

"Two days!" I gasped. What is it in the nearness of birth and death, the beginning and the end, that always startles? If one is told that behind those shuttered windows a dead body lies awaiting burial, even the most careless is surprised into awe. And so, though in a less degree, with birth.

"Two days," I mused aloud.

"Two and a half if you wish it," she condescended, "since he was born at midnight, and it is now midday."

Not knowing what to reply, but wishing to show my interest, I murmured something, awkwardly enough expressed I doubt not, about hoping her mother was well.

"One is never *tellement bien* at these times," she replied severely; and added, "But my father returned to work in the forest this morning."

"Was he ill too, then?"

"Ill!" with immense scorn. "*Malade? hey non!* he drank a little, that's all;" and, perhaps noting my expression, she continued with the worldly wisdom of ten years old, "it is usual—at such times."

We had come to a bend in the road, and she turned and

pointed far up the mountain slope.

"That is our chalet," she exclaimed, speaking for the first time with an approach to enthusiasm, "the one with the *grand sapin* beside the fountain."

The scene within the chalet flashed across my imagination. In a large low room, constructed entirely of wood, the new-made mother would be lying, half smothered beneath the *duvet*, within the curtained bed. Through the small double windows the reflected light from the snow outside would reveal her honest expressionless face, a strange pallor showing through the tanned skin. In her arms, swathed like a little mummy, its crumpled face surrounded by a crochet cap, she would hold her babe—that scrap of humanity which had now come to share the joys and the sorrows of that lonely mountain home. The mystery of life does not trouble these peasants: birth is accepted by them as an inevitable event. And though one may see a mother contemplating her child long and earnestly, she seldom betrays any feeling in watching the fresh spark of life so lately kindled from her own.

Looking down with an added interest on the small daughter of the house, I said, "So that is where you live?"

"*C'est sûr*," was the prosaic rejoinder; she had little emotion to spare for the plain facts of life.

The road was at last becoming drier and firmer. Soon after turning the corner at which Elise had halted, we came upon a large village, the half-way house of my walk. Compared with the usual picturesque appearance of these little communities, it had a singularly bare aspect. Gaunt stone buildings, whose purpose I did not discover, with gaps in their walls in lieu of windows, and projecting stones to serve as steps, gave the street an unpleasing look. The chalets were of the plainest architecture, unadorned by decorated rafters or carved balconies: only strict necessities were provided for among these pinched-looking dwellings.

I stopped for a drink of the clear icy water of the village fountain; this, too, was merely a roughly-tooled trough, and boasted no sign of the craftsman's art. The *curé*, a kindly-looking old man, was pacing up and down the little square, and Elise, going up to him, took his hand and gravely kissed it. He addressed a few words to her, which she acknowledged with a quaint bob-curtsey, and passed on down the street. He had been reciting his office when we appeared, and still held his open breviary; and although his lips moved as he resumed his walk to and fro, his mind was not entirely absorbed by his devotions. I was carrying my hat in my hand, and he called to me in a concerned voice, "*Ah! Ah! méfiez-vous du soleil de Mars!*" Beware of the March sunshine! Had he said, "Beware of the Ides of March," I should hardly have been less astonished, until

I recollected the superstition, strong in Central Europe, that this is the most treacherous month for sunstroke throughout the year. I thanked him for his reminder; and seeing him willing to converse, mentioned the poverty-stricken look of the place. Speaking with a sort of affectionate regret in his voice he answered—

"*Que voulez-vous? c'est un mauvais pays.*" A barren countryside, indeed! My eyes following his glance, noted the cruel shale slopes, the precipitous rock-strewn hills, and the scanty pastures scattered among them. This was a village to which the foreigner brought no wealth, and the livelihood of the peasants must be wrested from the unpromising locality.

"Yes, yes," he continued in the same tone, "they are poor enough, *ces braves gens.*"

While we stood talking, sounds of uproarious mirth had come from the café opposite. When a mountaineer condescends to merriment, his laughter is both loud and coarse. Remembering what Elise had told me of her father, I remarked, "Perhaps they do not get any richer over their wine?"

"*Ah! que voulez-vous?*" was the tolerant reply; "it is a hard life they lead. A hard life," he concluded with a sigh.

I was about to bid him good-day, when he asked me whether I had seen the church. I had not; and more out of deference to his implied desire than out of curiosity on my part, I mounted the steps. The vitiated atmosphere and smell of stale incense spoke of windows unopened since the previous summer. On the whitewashed walls hung the "Stages of the Cross," from the crude realism of which one was thankful to turn away. The furnishings of the altar consisted of the inevitable artificial flowers and gutted candles. I had heard these churches spoken of as the real home of the people, yet I wondered how their affections could long withstand the blighting effect of so stuffy and tawdry an interior. A picture of the Virgin attracted my attention. Depicted with a stereotyped expression of anguish on her face, she was holding her garment apart; and in the centre of her bosom (placed there, one imagines, more for the sake of symmetry than from a sense of anatomical correctness) lay a large red heart, pierced through with seven spears of abnormal dimensions. Could such a representation as this, in which I could only discern the ridiculous, really mean anything to a devout worshipper? The question was answered for me even as it rose to my mind. An old woman, whom I had noticed praying in a different part of the church when I entered, now came and knelt before it. She seemed unconscious of my presence, or at any rate indifferent to it. Her movements were stiff, and her shoulders bowed from constant labour. She clasped her knotted hands in supplica-

tion. Glancing at her face, I saw that it was wrinkled, and that from her closed eyes tears, the slow hard tears of old age, trickled down her withered cheeks. There was something awe-inspiring about this pathetic old figure. She had evidently come to pour out her troubles to one whose own heart had been pierced with affliction, and who, as she believed in simple faith, would never turn away from distress. And in the picture of "The Seven Sorrows of Mary," which a few minutes earlier had called forth my derision, this poor peasant dimly saw her own trials and griefs reflected.

Humbled in spirit, and musing on what I had seen, I resumed my way. A moment later I heard a voice at my elbow, and, looking down, was surprised to find that Elise was once more accompanying me.

"You are not a Catholic, then?" she exclaimed. It was slightly disconcerting to be thus taken to task, and I demanded—

"How do you know that?"

"You did not make the sign of the Cross as you passed the *Calvaire*," she replied reproachfully, nodding her head sideways to indicate the Crucifix in the churchyard. I had no idea my movements were being so closely scrutinised.

"It is not the custom in our country," I hazarded.

"*Quel drôle de pays!*" she commented with some warmth.

Our *rôles* had suddenly become reversed. It was I who was now being interrogated, while she sat in judgment; and knowing that among the better-class peasantry "these foreigners" are often considered as merely frivolous and pleasure-loving, I felt a natural desire to acquit myself with credit.

"You are then, perhaps, a Protestant?" she queried apprehensively.

I made an attempt at explanation, but felt I was making a sorry business of it.

"And the blessed Virgin," she suddenly demanded, "where does she find herself in your religion?"

Where indeed? By way of skirting this difficulty I began to question her on the subject of her own prayers.

"Some people," she informed me, "choose the hour of Vespers to pray in. For myself, no! The good God is too occupied at that moment; I prefer another; it is more reasonable."

But the sight of our destination, visible for the first time, and lying some 1200 feet below, turned her thoughts into another channel.

"Do you live in *la ville?*" she inquired, pointing to the valley township spread out at our feet. To her it was merely "the town," the only one she knew; and on my replying in the negative, she exclaimed, "That is a pity; the town is very beautiful."

Almost in a tone of apology, as if conscious of its inferiority, I told her that I lived in London.

"I have heard of it," she remarked, with the air of one who requires no further enlightenment on the subject. "It is even larger than *la ville*."

Looking down on the miniature streets and market-place, I assented, with what I thought was due restraint, that perhaps it was.

"And that amuses you?"

Like one rebuked, I hastened to compose my features into an expression of gravity suited to the occasion.

"And what are you going to do in *la ville?*" I asked.

"I go to see my uncle; he is rich; he works in the aluminium factory, and he earns —but enormously! he gains 50c." [less than 5d.] "an hour! 50c. is a great deal of money."

Remembering how hardly money comes to the hand of a peasant, I agreed that it was. Apparently I was passing my test more satisfactorily than I had dared to hope, for she now somewhat relaxed her judicial attitude, and became almost communicative.

"I go to see my uncle," she continued sedately. "I go to announce to him the birth of *le petit frère*."

The solemnity of this minute deputy, entrusted with such a mission, tickled my fancy, but, knowing her eyes were upon me, I dared not smile. She added that this uncle had two daughters older than herself.

"And are you fond of your cousins?"

"They have ideas in their heads."

"Ideas?"

"Yes. *Par exemple*, they wear hats."

"To keep the ideas warm perhaps," I murmured in an unguarded moment.

"*Comment?*" with severity.

"I mean, . . . don't you ever wear a hat yourself, Elise?"

"To go to Mass, and for occasions, certainly; at other times, never."

Anxious to ascertain whether these young ladies were guilty of other heinous propensities, I questioned her further on the subject: it seemed that their taste for millinery was far from being their only crime.

"They saved up their *petits sous* for two years, and what do you think it was for?" she asked, scorn in her voice—"To buy white dresses for their *première Communion!* Is it to be believed?"

"But would not you like a pretty dress yourself?"

"And how should a white dress advantage me?"

Being quite unable to answer this question, I asked whether she, too, saved up her *petits sous*.

"*C'est sûr*, but in any case not for a dress. Last year I had saved as much as 1 fr. 15. I kept it in the coffee-pot, the old one with the broken spout. My father said it was not a safe enough place, and he would put it in another. One day, when I wanted to look at it (one likes to hold it in one's hand sometimes, to feel more sure of having it), he could not find it—he had hidden it so securely; that was at the time of the cattle fair."

"And does your father drink at the fair?"

"Yes, a little; it is the custom. Afterwards he found the money, but it was changed from nickels into a franc; it was strange."

"Very. And where do you keep it now?"

Regarding me almost suspiciously, she replied, "In a certain place." I wondered whether the possibility of my climbing the slopes to look into the broken coffee-pot had crossed her mind.

"Now I have even more. My father gave me 10c. for saving a cow. He is a good father."

"Saving a cow?"

"It had strayed on to the avalanche track. And last winter some foreigners who had lost their way gave me 25c. for guiding them. One likes to have money."

"And what are you saving up for?"

"To buy a counterpane."

"A what?"

"A counterpane. One would like to have a counterpane on one's bed."

Perhaps my surprise would have been greater had I not at that moment espied a patch of gentians growing in a field near by. They were the first flowers I had seen, and the pleasure of gathering them and gazing into their depths was exquisite. The colour of a *gentiana nivalis* is to blue what the scarlet of a geranium is to red—vivid, glowing, intense. The hue of its petals, heightened by the pure white of its eye, is of an almost unbelievable brightness.

Elise had followed me into the meadow. "So you like flowers, then?" she asked, not quite sure how to place this weakness.

There were other treasures in the field besides these alpine blossoms: under the protection of a bank a cowslip reared its dainty head.

"I'm not going any farther," I cried, "it is early yet, and there is plenty of time; I shall stay here for a bit."

"Then I leave you," announced my matter-of-fact companion.

"Wait a minute before you go," I said, looking through my small change. "Look here, would you like to buy some chocolate with that in *la ville*?"

She took the coin and turned it over in her little palm, already hardened by labour.

"Chocolate is good," she remarked doubtfully.

Evidently the counterpane had to be taken into consideration.

"Well, if you will spend that on sweets, I will give you another to put with your *petits sous*."

"Then I thank you," she cried; and her face, lighted with pleasure, looked more childish than I had seen it yet.

"Would you like to give me a kiss before you go?"

"*Comment?*"

Half-abashed, I repeated my request.

"If you desire it," she answered, and before I realised her intention she had taken my hand, as I had seen her

take the priest's, and pressed it to her lips.

"Good-bye, Elise."

"*Alors, adieu.*"

As she turned to go, she commenced a little song, a litany, if I mistake not. On gaining the road she skipped a few steps in lightness of heart; it was almost uncanny to see this sedate child-woman frisking as she went. After a moment she stopped, slipped her basket from her shoulders, and having carefully laid aside its contents produced a red handkerchief from its depths. Into a corner of this she tied the coin destined to be added to her little store. The other seemed to puzzle her; she placed it in a deep under-pocket such as market-women wear, but apparently that was not altogether satisfactory. Presently she came running back.

"It would be more *pratique* if you changed this into nickels for me," she announced with perfect gravity, holding out the small silver coin. "Like that, I shall not be cheated in *la ville*; one never knows what may happen."

I did as she requested; and having carefully counted her change, she resumed her litany and departed. As she disappeared from sight, I felt I had lost a friend.

This seemed a suitable spot on which to eat my lunch, and I pulled my sandwiches from my knapsack. The warmth of the sun as I lay upon the grass after my simple repast was delicious, but the air was soft and strangely unsatisfying to the lungs, and produced a feeling of lassitude unknown for months. I gazed at the tremendous precipices on the opposite side of the valley, and marvelled at their grandeur. Never had the peaks seemed so majestic as at this moment when I was on the point of leaving. Some enthusiast has compared his love of the mountains with a sailor's passion for the sea. It is a beautiful idea. But as the sailor, though he has spent half of his voyage dreaming of home, can never be happy for long ashore or content till he breathes the salt air again, so I knew, even in this moment of departing, that I never could be satisfied until I trod the heights once more. Such is the perversity of human nature.

But it was time to be going, and having filled my knapsack with gentians, I took to the road again. A diligence, swinging past with cracking whip and jingling bells, reminded me that I was on the high-road to life and movement. The dust raised by the cumbrous vehicle came almost as a surprise after the long seclusion in frost-bound regions, and I watched the fine white powder settle by the wayside as, at the beginning of winter, one watches the first snowflakes come to earth.

Soon the road began to run through vineyards. These had been built up with infinite toil on slopes which, in England, would have been considered impossible to cultivate. Each little enclosure was upheld by a retaining wall; and now the first process of the laborious

vine cultivation was being carried out: one could hear the snick of the *secateurs* as the workers pruned with deft and certain hand. Mindful of the superstition that had astonished me earlier in the day, they wore broad-brimmed hats to protect the nape of the neck. And in truth the sun beat down upon these barren, southern slopes with surprising fierceness for the time of year.

On the outskirts of the town stood an almond-tree in full bloom, just as I had pictured it, but weariness deprived me of the expected thrill. Foot-sore and thirsty, I entered a *confiserie* and called for tea. The sight of a shop, the people who came and went upon their business, the traffic in the street—all seemed strange and unreal in my eyes, like things read in a book; it was difficult to believe that I was really once more moving in the ordinary life of a town.

I made my way to the station, and while waiting for the train, looked up at the spot which had been my home for so long. The sky was still intensely blue, and the pines showed up like splashes of ink on the dazzling white background. I thought of my hotel companions still among the conditions of winter, while I was luxuriating in the warmth of spring. There, too, lying like a brown fir-cone on the snow, lay Elise's chalet, the one homestead of the many clustered here and there on the mountain-side, of which I now knew something. I pictured the sturdy little maiden's return. She would recount her adventures to her parents, not pouring them out in an eager torrent as our children would do, but with decent deliberation—as opportunity offered. My every word would be repeated and weighed in the balance, and a verdict would be passed.

"*Eh bien, voilà,*" the father would say in the tone of one who makes a concession, "There are good and bad in every nation."

That I should be given the benefit of the doubt was the most for which I could hope.

The train arrived, and for a moment all was bustle and confusion. Having secured a seat, I lowered the window for a last look, as we steamed out of the station. Good-bye, wonderful life-giving mountains; good-bye, quaint little Elise; and I started on my journey back to a city that is even larger and more important than *la ville*.

450 MILES TO FREEDOM.

BY CAPTAIN M. A. R. JOHNSTON and CAPTAIN K. D. YEARSLEY.

CHAPTER X.

As the country before us appeared to be quite deserted, we began to move off a little before 3 P.M. The going was much the same as in the early morning, but what had then been small nullahs became broader and deeper ravines, running across our path at intervals of seven to eight hundred yards. The north sides of the ravines were especially steep. An hour and a half after our start we saw ahead of us some men and a string of camels, possibly engaged in contraband affairs with Cyprus. Accordingly we halted under cover of some rocks until we could march again unseen. The rate of marching was slow, hardly two miles an hour, for we were all very exhausted, trudging along in the hot sun, and Grunt was almost fainting. After two hours he had to give up. The terrific blow on his head by the brigand must have been the start of his collapse, and now, after many days of sticking to it, he could go no farther. His head felt very dizzy and each foot weighed a ton. We knew there must be water in a valley a few hundred yards ahead, as we had seen some trees and a bit of a village. We therefore halted for food in a small nullah, meaning to get to the stream after dark. The dixie containing the mixture of cocoa, rice, and grit was produced, and we had our meal. The grit was a blessing in a way, as one had to eat slowly. Two ounces of rice, tinged with cocoa, does not go far with a ravenous craving for food. As dusk came on we walked slowly for a few hundred yards to the edge of the river valley, the sides of which were precipitous and impossible to manœuvre by moonlight. Cochrane and Nobby walked along the edge of the ravine to see if there was an easier descent, but found none. While they were away Grunt told us that he wished to be left behind, as he was afraid of keeping us back. He said that if we left a little food with him he could lie up for a couple of days, till we were clear of the locality, and he would then go to the nearest village, buy food, and make for the coast later,—if he felt strong enough and was not captured.

When Cochrane returned we held a council of war and decided to halt for the whole night. Accordingly we returned to the rice-and-grit nullah, and worked down it towards the main valley until we found a good resting-place. Nobby found a spring of ex-

cellent water a short way farther on, and there our water-bottles were refilled. By way of medical comfort Grunt was given the small quantity of Ovaltine that remained and a piece of biscuit. The Ovaltine had been carried loose in a bag since we started, and was in consequence as hard as a brick. Johnny tried to cut bits off the brick, but the knife edge merely turned on its owner's thumb, so in the end Grunt had to gnaw it. On these very cold nights we had a system of what we called snuggling, usually in pairs; in larger numbers if the ground permitted, but only once did the level of our sleeping-place permit of more than two. That was on the following night. This night Grunt's snuggling partner lit a pipe, the best pipe of his life, and listened to poor old Grunt gnawing Ovaltine. It was hard to bear. Fortunately the pipe and the Ovaltine lasted for the same time. Grunt was very depressed. He reminded his partner how at Yozgad one day he, being of massive build and great strength, had prophesied that he would stand the trek worse than any of us. Ellis, as usual, was very restless. He is a noisy sleeper. When he doesn't grunt he snores, and he is not still for a minute. We never heard him whistle in his sleep, but doubtless he does. When lying in hiding by day we had to wake him if any one came at all close to us.

Before we went to sleep it was decided that the following morning three of us should go to the nearest village on the river in the guise of Germans, and buy enough food for the party to finish the journey to the coast, some fifty-five miles away.

At daylight, about 4.30 A.M., we went farther down the nullah to the spring. Here we cooked a two-ounce porridge ration, and then began our preparations for entering the village. The three to go were Grunt, Nobby, and Johnny. Grunt had the best Turkish of our party, so he also had the undying disgrace of playing the *rôle* of Hun officer. Nobby and Johnny were the Boche rank and file. It was essential to the success of the scheme that we should make a good impression on the villagers. Smartness was our watchword. The theatrical party therefore were allowed to commandeer clothes. Grunt had Nobby's "Gor Blimy" (better known, perhaps, as cap, service dress, mark two, star); Ellis's uniform coat, his own trousers, the Old Man's wrist-watch, and Perce's boots—not a bad effort. Johnny had his own kit with the exception of his trousers, an important part of which had remained lazily behind on a rocky slope the second night of the escape, while Johnny energetically slid on. Nobby had Ellis's "Gor Blimy" and boots, the Old Man's coat, and Looney's trousers. The three actors then shaved, washed, put "Vermijelly" grease on their boots to give the latter a false air of respectability, and at

8.30 A.M. were ready for their performance. They thought they were playing a drama at the time, but looking back it was true comedy. The three set off down the steep goat-track towards the village. It was a tense moment, and we all thought that the evening would most probably find us once more under the orders of some uncivilised Turkish *chaouse;* for we had decided that if the three were captured in the village the other five would give themselves up. Poor old Cochrane looked very anxious, and it was not to be wondered at. On the seventeenth day of his former attempt to escape, some two years previously, he and the two other naval officers of his party of three were compelled by starvation to buy food from a shepherd's hut. This man informed on them, with the result that they were taken by gendarmes. Recaptured, they were kept for six months in a filthy prison in Constantinople, untried by any court-martial. When the latter was held, Cochrane and his friends were given a three weeks' sentence, but actually were imprisoned for yet another four months. This is an excellent instance of Turkish justice, and the kind we were to expect should any one make a false move in the village.

Grunt, the officer, walked on ahead. Nobby and Johnny, each with an empty pack and haversack on their back, marched behind. Their first glimpse of the village with its two grey-domed mosques and a few hundred houses rather frightened them, for it was a much bigger one than they had expected, and the larger the village the more likely they were to be discovered as impostors. It was, however, too late to turn back. There were men and women working in the fields who had seen them, though they caused no real interest except to small boys, who are inquisitive the world over; so they marched on, Nobby and Johnny keeping perfect step with Grunt at a respectful two paces in the rear. When they entered the village they asked the way to the headman's house.

Their story was to be a plausible one. Their German surveying party was composed of one officer and seven men. They had left the railway at Eregli, and, taking to cart transport, were making for Mersina. The carts had unfortunately broken down, and being pressed for time they had marched on. They now wanted a few days' supplies for the party. A hard story to disprove without taking a lot of trouble, and Turks usually avoid taking much. Also, they had that forged document in Turkish, with the office stamp of Enver Pasha's Ministry of War on it to prove their *bond fides;* but this was only to be shown as a last resource.

After being wrongly directed three times by people who, if questioned further, would probably have said they were strangers to the place, the party entered a shop, and

Grunt requested the owner to allow his small boy to show them the way. They were taken to a two-storied timber-built house, against the door of which lolled a Turkish private soldier. The conventional greetings passed, and the man asked in Turkish if they were Germans. The reply was in the affirmative. To their immense surprise this "simple soldat" in an out-of-the-way village started talking a very fluent German. It was the limit. The rank and file now came to the fore, and one suggested that the man had misunderstood them. They were not Germans: they were Magyars (Hungarians), and did not understand a word of German. The last part of the statement was untrue by two words, for the three of them compared notes that evening and counted the German words they knew—"Verboten, Schweinfleisch, and Bier" were the sum total. Stepping past the soldier, Grunt led the way into a small hall furnished with some harness and a few carpet saddle-bags. On the left was an open door, which they entered. Here was a long narrow room with a low ceiling. On three sides of it carpets were spread, with a few cushions on the floor. Reclining against the cushions on one side were two grey-bearded Turks, and a young Greek in a straw hat, blue suit, and brown boots. As they came in, the Greek said in English: "Come on, come along,"—the limit was surpassed! Eventually they found that the Greek knew only a few words of English, but it was very unpleasant at the time. Grunt gave the Turkish salutation and sat down. Nobby and Johnny stayed strictly at attention. Grunt motioned with his hand, and received a smart salute and heel-click from his two subordinates, who then dared to seat themselves. The old Turk, who received Grunt's salutation, was obviously the headman. His jacket was gaudy, his pantaloons were very voluminous, and many daggers graced his highly-coloured belt.

To our party's disgust the German scholar now appeared and sat down beside Johnny. People began to flock in, and the questioning started—thousands of questions. The three answered as best they could and gave their story. The soldier now explained that he had served many years in Austria and knew a great deal about it. The actors did not. Where had they come from in Austria? Oh, Pruth! This opened the flood-gates once more. Did they know such and such a place? At some names they nodded and looked intelligent: at others they shook their heads. Fortunately the headman here broke in. Had they rifles and revolvers? Revolvers, yes! but the rifles had been left in the carts. Would they show him the revolvers? Grunt refused, saying there was an army order against it. And so it went on. Then another unpleasant incident took place. Grunt was wearing Ellis's service dress

jacket. Before we left Yozgad its brass buttons had been covered with cloth, so as not to flash in the sun or in the moonlight. One of the large front buttons, however, had become uncovered during the days that followed escape, and though we remarked upon the fact when Grunt put on the coat in the morning, it was not covered again. Now it caught the scholar's eye. He crawled along to Grunt and started fingering it. He knew something about buttons, he said, and that particular one was an English button. The scholar was no fool! Johnny was very contemptuous—didn't the man know that it was a specially good Magyar button, and one of the latest pattern? The scholar certainly made for excitement.

Now was committed a grave error that might have had disastrous results. A small bag containing ¼ lb. of tea had been brought along to the village, in order to propitiate the headman should need arise and at this juncture Grunt thought fit to offer it to him, extolling its excellence as he did so. No sooner had the bag changed hands than to their horror the three saw that the word TEA was marked plainly on it in indelible pencil. Had the Greek seen it, he would almost certainly have been able to read a simple word like this, and the game would have been up. But once more the party's luck stood by them, and the incident closed with the headman putting the bag in his pocket.

It was dangerous for our party to talk anything but Turkish, even amongst themselves. Hindustani might have been safe, but they did not think of it. Early in the morning we had decided what food should be demanded. The list was as follows:—

Five okes of meat (an oke equals 2¾ lbs.)
Eight okes of raisins.
Twenty " bread.
Ten " wheat.
Eight " cheese.
Half oke of butter.
One " honey.
Half " tobacco.
150 eggs.

Of course we did not expect to be able to obtain all these, but they were now asked for. As each item was named, the price was discussed by all the occupants of the room except the wretched buyers. Usually the price first mentioned was fairly moderate, but in a short time they had run it up amongst themselves as if they were bidding at an auction. They then turned to the buyers and said "such a thing costs so much," and the buyers were hungry enough to swallow any price. It is a trait of Turkish commerce that no article ever has a fixed value. Finally 23½ Turkish pounds were paid in advance for the stores.

It was here that the party obtained a little war news. Of this we had had none since leaving Yozgad, and at that time the Turkish papers would have had us believe that the Germans were even then knocking at the gates of Paris. In the headman's house the war

was now discussed, and the fighting powers of the various nations criticised. As for the British, they were a very rich and powerful people, and yet just look how they had been driven into the sea at Gallipoli, and how the Turks had forced them to surrender at Kut-el-Amara. The French, of course, were not good fighters, and the Americans quite untrained to arms. The actors had perforce to agree to all these statements, but their joy was great, though well hidden under a disgusted mien, when they heard that the Germans were retiring.

After this conversation came a welcome diversion. A round table like a dumb-waiter, about 9 inches in height, was brought in. With it came a large supply of chupatties, a flat plate of honey, one of cream, a bowl of sour milk, and a dish piled high with greasy wheat pilau; and following the food came the headman's son—a lad of nine. The headman beckoned our three to approach, and, sitting on their hunkers round the table, the breakfast party of seven began the meal. The method of eating was simple, but one required either genius or years of practice to be any good at it. Break off a piece of chupattie, quickly shape it into a shovel, scoop up as much honey or cream as possible, eat the shovel and its contents, and start again. Johnny was a novice at the game. Though ravenous for food he was an amateur, and his miserable little shovels were merely damp with honey or cream when he ate them. Mark Twain is unfortunately dead. He alone could have described how the nine-year-old boy ate: his shovels were immense, and he always took a full scoop. He was swallowing continuously, and while his right hand was feeding his mouth, his left had already shaped a new shovel. He was an expert—a record-breaker. Grunt and Nobby fared little better than Johnny, for the three had to conceal the fact that they were starving. The meal lasted not more than six minutes. Johnny reckoned he had absorbed one chupattie with a negligible quantity of honey, cream, and pilau. The boy must have eaten eight, and the greater part of everything else, and thoroughly earned the undying admiration of three Englishmen. The meal over, Nobby and Johnny put on their packs and haversacks. For a change the German scholar said they were really good Austrian packs and haversacks: perhaps the button incident had affected him.

A guide was now produced, and the Magyar rank and file went a-shopping. The packs could not possibly carry the amount of food which it had been decided to buy, so quantities were cut down, and finally the two returned to the headman's house, each carrying a load of about 57 lbs. During their absence Grunt had to answer innumerable questions about his firearms.

After a short delay the three took their departure, Nobby and Johnny again clicking heels and doing a pantomime

chorus salute. The distance to the remainder of the party was one and a half miles, and the path climbed steeply the whole way. The Hun officer of course marched coolly ahead, while Nobby and Johnny plodded behind, anything but cool. After going a few hundred yards they glanced behind them. As was to be expected, they were being followed. First came the beastly German-speaking man, then the Greek, and after them the headman himself on a donkey. Johnny advised Grunt to go on ahead and warn the others that we were now Magyars, and that we each had a revolver. Nobby and Johnny walked as fast as they could, but the sun was very hot and the loads very heavy for them, in their weak condition. The men who were following eventually caught up with them and together they came to where the remainder of the party were camped. This gave the headman a bit of a shock, as he thought we had lied about everything, and so did not expect to see five other Magyars. As soon as the party could get their equipment on we formed up in two ranks. Grunt made some guttural sounds, at which we "left turned" and started to march off into the blue, leaving three very puzzled men behind us. After an hour's going we halted and, seeing no one following us, had a meal of two chupatties and six raw eggs each. For the two odd ones of the fifty that had been bought we had "fingers out."

"Fingers out" was a procedure whereby all such debatable matters were decided during our escape. On the last sound of the words "Fingers up!" each member of the party held up any number of fingers he chose, subject to the maximum being four and the minimum one. Having decided beforehand at which person the counting would start, and which way round it was to go, the total number of fingers shown was added up and on whatever member of the party this number ended when counting round, that was the man. This was the sort of thing that happened: "Starting with Perce, going round right-handed, Fingers up!" Suppose the total was 19. That would mean, in our party of eight, that the man two after Perce would win the count. "Fingers out" was used only to settle who was to have the pleasant things, such as these odd eggs, or the scrapings of the cooking-pot; duties such as going on ahead to scout or going back to a spring to fetch water were undertaken by volunteers.

We were still on the wrong side of the ravine in which was the village, and inasmuch as it was dangerous to stay in a locality where we had aroused such suspicion, the ravine must be crossed. A mile farther on we discovered a possible line of descent to a ledge half-way down. The ravine was about four hundred feet deep and its sides almost precipitous. As we climbed

slowly down, Perce, who was coming last, started three enormous boulders, which crashed below. As Johnny leapt aside one missed him by only a few inches. Half the descent was successfully accomplished, but the ground beneath fell sheer away; so we went a few hundred yards in an up-stream direction on our own level. Coming round a rocky spur a wonderful sight met our gaze. Beyond us the cliff curved round in a shallow crescent. It was of soft yellow sandstone, and contained two large uninhabited cave-villages, about two hundred yards apart. With the passing of centuries the cliff had worn away, revealing a honeycomb of square caves. The larger village must have had ten or twelve stories of rooms connected up by some form of staircases inside, but we did not see them. The smaller one had two stories laid bare, but it was not as well-finished as the other. The entrances to the village were Roman arches, under which ran a short passage, leading to the door itself, which was rectangular in shape. In some cases the one archway contained two doors. The finest arch was carved on both sides, with crude paintings on it. From the foot of the villages a very steep pathway ran down to the river-bed below. This we followed, and a quarter of an hour later arrived at the bottom. Here was the most delightful sight we had seen since our start from Yozgad: green and shady trees lining the grassy bank of a murmuring mountain stream. The water was ice-cold and clear as crystal—a merit when we thought of the stagnant cattle-wallows from which we had had to drink. It was too tempting to leave at once. We found what we thought was a secluded spot, and here we first of all arranged our packs so that each of us had an equal weight to carry after the morning's purchases. Then we bathed. The joy of that bathe after seventeen days was indescribable, and worth many a hardship. A bridle-path ran along the edge of the stream, and unfortunately any one who happened to pass would be able to see us. As luck would have it, an old man rode by on a donkey while we were engaged in giving our socks a much-needed wash. When he had gone we looked at each other and heaved a sigh of relief, for he had not even glanced in our direction; but when he rode past us again twice in the next twenty minutes and still failed to look at us, we thought it was time to move. Hastily filling our water-bottles and chargals we started to climb the other side of the ravine. The chargal, an extra weight of ten pounds and hard to carry, changed hands twice before we got to the top, from where the view of the cave-villages was very fine.

For the next three hours we picked our way over dreadful going, amongst grey limestone rocks, cracked and pock-marked everywhere. Progress was very slow, as one had to watch one's

feet the whole time for fear of breaking an ankle. It was here that we started a leveret, and made a vain attempt to kill a long snake which swished past Johnny's feet. We saw four snakes during our escape — one of which made Nobby leap violently into the air as he nearly trod on it. When there was a chance of resting, we were almost too tired to think at all, so the thought of snakes did not worry us.

At about 5 P.M. Cochrane betted Johnny half a sovereign that the sea would be visible from the next rise, provided there was no further mountain range within five miles. The bet was lost by nearly a week, for it was not till the twenty-third day out that seascapes became part of our scenery.

At 6 P.M. we halted in a rocky cup-shaped depression with some dried wood lying about. Here we set to work with the meat bought at the village. It was, or had been, a beautiful goat-kid, and from it we made a stew such as no multi-millionaire can buy. Certainly no "Cordon bleu" has ever achieved such an appetising dish. The recipe will now be divulged: Take a joint of goat-kid, put it on a rock and saw pieces off it with a blunt clasp-knife. Place the bits in a dixie over a wood fire, add a little water, and wait impatiently till the meat is half cooked. Put your share into an enamel mug, and with the hunger of seventeen days' starvation as relish, and the thumb and forefinger of the right hand as a fork, eat, and thank your God.

Our dinner this evening was one to be remembered: a mug-ful of meat, two chupatties, a table-spoonful of cheese, and a few spoonfuls of cooked wheat for each of us; and for the first time for many a day we lay down feeling well fed. That night we found a level bit of ground where five could sleep together. Of the rest, two slept practically in a bushy fir-tree, and Cochrane curled round the fire. All went well until some one of the five—Ellis for a sovereign —wanted to turn, and the chance of sleeping was at an end. Fortunately, it was nearly time to move off, so we did not lose much rest. Just before daylight we started and did about two miles in two hours, the going being of the ankle-breaking variety. We were not many miles from a main road, so it was senseless to risk travelling much after dawn. Looney, too, with his iron-clad ammunition boots, was going very lame, with large blisters on his heels. We therefore hid for the day in another rocky cup similar to that of the previous evening. Shortly after dawn, Nobby, a keen shikari, slaughtered a hoopoo, which had the misfortune to have a fit in front of him. This made a welcome addition to our larder, and when, at our meal before starting that evening, we had "fingers out" for it, Nobby very appropriately won it. In this bivouac we had the misfortune to lose

our second and last pair of scissors—they were a great loss, and we sadly needed them later on. The cracks in the rocks, where we spent the day, were several feet deep, and the scissors are no doubt lying at the bottom of one of these.

There was some doubt who was guilty of the crime of losing them, but we bet another sovereign it was ——.

CHAPTER XI.

During this 25th August we had fixed our position so far as our obsolete map would permit. We had, we thought, just crossed the watershed of the Taurus, and if the day had only been clearer might perhaps have obtained our first view of the sea from our point of vantage that morning. This fact of being on the watershed, together with a compass-bearing on to a peak recognisable to the south, settled our position fairly definitely as a little to the west of the range marked Gueuk Tepe on the map. This was in agreement with a check by dead reckoning based on Looney's diary from the time we had passed the Ak Gueul, and meant that we had still forty-five miles between us and the sea, even as the crow flies; or, by the way we should take for the sake of better going, something well over fifty miles.

Soon after setting out on the following night's march, the accuracy of our estimate was confirmed, for the map had showed a main road not far ahead from our supposed position, and this as a matter of fact we crossed within half an hour's trek. Just beyond the road and a little to the east of our course rose a cone-shaped hill, crowned by what at first looked like an old castle, but which, on a nearer view, resolved itself into a natural outcrop of white rock. It was then 7 o'clock. An hour later we were grateful for the find of a small stream of perfectly clear water. This was the first we had discovered since crossing the beautiful valley where we had enjoyed our much-needed bathe thirty odd hours before. There is no doubt, however, that by this time we had become comparatively inured to a shortage of water. It was only a fortnight ago that one of the party had collapsed after a lesser privation. Now we did not even trouble to fill completely the larger of the two serviceable chargals, although it is true there were other reasons which encouraged us in this serenity. For one thing, now that we were on the southern slopes of the Taurus, we hoped that our water troubles were over. In point of fact, we were to find ourselves sadly disappointed. Then again, we were loth to put such a drag upon our speed as a full chargal certainly was, change hands though it might every half hour. So far that night we had maintained a

pace of four miles an hour. The meat eaten during the previous two days had undoubtedly met a very real need, and with the cheese and chupatties, and the longer periods for rest, had given us a sense of renewed vigour. Time, however, still passed with the same deadly slowness. On the first night that we had started taking the chargals turn and turn about at regular intervals, more than one of the party had imagined that he had been doing a spell of a full hour, and was horrified to hear that in reality it had been only half that length.

On this night the moon rose at about 8.30; there was therefore a short period of darkness between sunset and moonlight, and as we should have a three-quarter moon for the whole of the rest of the night, we could afford to rest for twenty minutes when the twilight had faded. This was the more desirable, as we were still in difficult country. The surface itself was not as bad as might have been expected, for, after all, we were in the Taurus; but our course was constantly being crossed by steep nullahs. The climb up their farther sides was very fatiguing.

To avoid some of these, we proceeded, wherever possible, to follow the crest-line, and as soon as the moon was up the field-glasses once more proved their value by enabling Cochrane to pick out the best route. As time went on, however, the country became more and more broken, until we found it necessary, if endless detours were to be avoided, to take the nullahs as they came. After a few more climbs, we almost gave up trying to keep on our proposed course, which was a little E. of S., and nearly decided instead to follow down a valley to the S.W., which promised better going. In the end, however, we contented ourselves with making a mile and a half an hour in our original direction, and were rewarded by finding in one of the nullahs a little spring of water.

At 11 P.M., having found a fairly sheltered nook (for the wind at night was always cold at this altitude), we took the opportunity of snatching a little sleep. It has to be confessed that some of us also made a premature attack on the next day's ration of cheese and chupatties. To help level up our loads, these had been shared out already, and after our experience of the joys of a full meal—we allude again to the goat—we found having food in our packs a sore temptation. Without the safeguard of common ownership, it ceased to be inviolable. Yet perhaps after all it was best to eat at night, when we were doing all the hard work, and when, in addition, it was cold.

Shortly after midnight we moved on, and were soon cheered by the discovery of a narrow track leading in the right direction, and cleverly avoiding all the difficulties of the broken ground on either side. This we were able to follow at a hard 3½ miles an hour until a little before daybreak. Then seeing lights

ahead, we left the main track, thinking it must be leading us on to a village. Immediately around us there was no cover from view, and as the first tinge of dawn lit up the countryside, we saw that our only hiding-place would be in the wooded hills on the farther side of the valley in which lay the supposed houses. Proceeding at our best speed, we began a race with the sun, punctuated only by halts of a few seconds now and then as Cochrane searched anxiously round through the field-glasses; for we could hear herds moving about, and other lights had come into view. The descent proved steeper and longer than we had anticipated, and it was not till after five o'clock, and just before sunrise, that we reached the foot of the valley. Here we found we had to cross a stream ten to twelve feet wide, and, on account of the marshy ground, at a point not 500 yards away from the lights. These came, as we now saw, from a small group of timber huts, and in our haste to reach cover we plunged straight through the stream, to find that only a few yards farther up we might have crossed by stepping-stones in a place where the stream was only a foot deep. However, this was no time for vain regrets, and we were soon clambering up the farther slope, which was covered with scattered pines. Under cover of these we gave ourselves a couple of minutes' breathing space, for the hill was steep, and then went on over the top of the first ridge, a thousand feet above the stream, and into a little dip beyond. Here we found a trickle of water, and settled down amongst some small trees and thorny scrub. The first thing to do was to take off our soaked boots and let them dry; after this we prepared ourselves a brew of cocoa, well earned by what we reckoned was a 27-mile march in the previous twelve hours. Most of our feet were terribly sore, and Looney spent an hour sewing on bandages before he struggled back into his boots that day.

With the present satisfactory rate of progress we could afford to be rather more liberal with our food; and so the camp fire never died down, for we took it in turns to make pilaus all that day. These were made from crushed wheat, and differed from the porridge we had been accustomed to make from it while at Yozgad, in that before boiling it was mixed with a little melted dripping, a supply of which we had obtained from the village. The resulting pilau was a vast improvement on the plain porridge, besides being rather quicker to cook—a consideration in view of the smallness of our cooking-pot. Altogether we must have had five pilaus at this bivouac, but as each when distributed filled only a third of a pint mug, we cannot be accused of greed. To avoid all waste we had brought along even the bones of the goat; from these we now made a

weak soup, after which the bones themselves were divided out for a last picking, some of us even eating their softer portions. We were now out of sight of the huts in the valley which we had so hastily crossed, but could see the top of the hill on the farther side; here was a fairly large walled village, with houses built of stone and roofed with the usual flat mud roofs. Although we could see this with our glasses, we were too far to be observed ourselves, and moreover little sign of life appeared there. That afternoon, however, we had a few anxious moments, when two men came over the next ridge to the south of us: they passed within a hundred yards of where we lay, but appeared not to have seen us.

In the evening, having moved a short distance up the same ridge, we were having a five minutes' halt when two more men, this time on donkeys, came over the crest and almost rode on top of us. They asked, "Who are you? Where are you going?" and "Why hiding?" We did not answer, so they said, "Are you foreigners that you don't understand Turkish?" Then they went on and so did we. Fortunately, even should they report any suspicions they had, we were in country that was much intersected and in which it would have been difficult for any one to trace us. So difficult, in fact, was the bit of ground which met our view on reaching the top of the range we were on, that it was some minutes before we could make up our minds which would be the best line to follow.

Eventually we decided to make for a ridge which seemed negotiable, and on proceeding came very shortly afterwards to a spring and a goat-track. After drinking all the water we could, we followed the latter. It was as well we did so, for the track took us round the head of a precipitous ravine which might have taken a whole day to cross if we had attempted to pass over direct. On the far side, too, the track still kept the general direction we wanted, namely, some 20 degrees east of south, and so we clung to it steadily until 8.30 P.M. We had been marching for three hours, and now following our procedure of the previous night, slept till 9.45, by which time the moon had risen. Before halting, we had seen one or two shepherds' fires ahead, so took the precaution to move fifty yards or so off the track in case there should be any traffic. By this time we had given up keeping a watch on the night halts, though we still did so by day. The reason for this was that sleep was only obtainable during the nights, and we could not afford to let even one member of the party go without it. On this particular occasion it was comparatively warm, considering that we were on an open hillside in the Taurus, and we were much rested by the sleep we obtained.

When we resumed our way we still kept to our friendly

path, although it was becoming more and more stony. A little before midnight we found ourselves in a dilemma, for, after leading us to the edge of a deep valley which ran at right angles to our course, the track now branched right and left. The problem was which path to follow. If we had stopped to think we might have realised that, in mountainous country, even the most friendly road cannot always take you by a direct route, and that the longest way round is often the shortest way home. However, on this occasion we made an error of judgment and went straight ahead. The slope, at first comparatively grassy and gradual, became rapidly more rocky and precipitous, until at about 1.30 A.M., after descending close upon 1500 feet, we found ourselves on the edge of a yawning gorge, at the bottom of which foamed a raging mountain torrent. We were not as glad to see this water as usual, for we had crossed a rivulet on our way down: at this we had already quenched our thirst, although at the time dogs had been barking at us from some shepherds' huts on the valley slope. The difficulty now was to find a practicable path up the farther bank. The torrent itself was passable easily enough, for natural stepping-stones abounded in its rock-strewn bed; and in fact we did cross and re-cross it several times in a painful endeavour to make our way a little farther to the west.

Everywhere, however, beyond a rough and narrow ledge of rock by the side of the stream, the far bank rose up sheer above us. In the moonlight the scene was wonderful, and we could not help thinking how perfect a place this would have been for a day's halt. But we could not afford to lose precious time, and for the present our whole aim was to leave it as soon as possible. At one spot, having seen a light burning not far from the water's edge, we proceeded very cautiously. It proved to proceed from the stump of a tree which some one had probably set on fire to warm himself and had left burning: happily no one was there now. After a two hours' struggle we had to own that we were defeated, and were compelled to climb back out of the gorge and still on the wrong side. Moving along its edge at a higher level, for another two hours we searched in vain for a more likely crossing-place, and were almost in despair when we suddenly heard the voices of men and women below us. Looking down, we saw in the moonlight a party of Turks or Armenians in the act of crossing a fine old bridge which spanned the gorge between two absolutely vertical banks in a single semicircular arch of stone. Even now it was some little time before we could pick up the path leading down to it, but when we did so we were agreeably surprised to find that the bridge was not guarded. In the last five hours

we had progressed but one mile in the right direction.

When at last we crossed the gorge it was barely an hour to dawn, and so we had not followed the mountain road leading up the farther side for long before we had to be on the look-out for a hiding-place. There was little cover higher up the hill; we therefore turned right-handed and dropped down once more towards the gorge, hoping that after all it would do us the good turn of providing us with water and shade for the day. On the way down, however, we saw a cave hollowed out in the rocky hill-side, and as the bank below was very steep, we decided we would not give ourselves a single foot of unnecessary climbing when we started off again next evening. We therefore entered the cave; but Cochrane and Perce, after ridding themselves of their packs, valiantly climbed down again to the water and came back with the two chargals full. So much had all the fruitless clambering taken out of us that we were more tired on this day than after double the distance on the night previous, and, except for taking turns to cook, every one lay like a log in the cave. The latter faced west, and was roofed by two elliptical semi-domes side by side beneath a larger arch in the rock, but being shallow in width compared to the height of the roof, allowed the sun to stream in upon us in the latter part of the afternoon.

On leaving the cave at about 7 P.M., as rugged country still lay ahead, we thought it best to work our way obliquely up the hill and regain the track which had led us up from the bridge over the ravine. To this we clung for the greater part of the night which followed, although it involved passing through several villages. We found ourselves in the first almost before we realised that a village existed there at all: it seemed, however, a city of the dead, for not a dog barked at our approach, and the narrow crooked streets appeared deserted, until suddenly the white-clad figure of a woman flitted across our path. Fortunately she did not pause to find out who were these strange nocturnal visitors.

Not long afterwards we saw lights ahead, and as we drew nearer found that our road branched to right and left, the latter branch leading towards the lights which seemed to proceed from a village. After the previous night's experience we had no intention of attempting any cross-country going if we could possibly avoid it. Here, indeed, to go on direct would have necessitated crossing first a valley of unknown depth, and then an enormous ridge which reared up its black bulk against the clear starry sky. It was fairly obvious that the two roads went round either end of this ridge; after that it was a toss-up which was the more likely to lead us towards the sea. In view of the village and of the noisy clatter on the stony track of the booted members of the party,

Cochrane elected to take the right-hand branch, and this we followed for over a mile. It was leading us due west, and seemed likely to continue to do so for several miles more before the ridge was rounded. The coast opposite our position ran, we knew, rather from N.E. to S.W., and so every mile we marched west added another to our distance from the coast. At the next halt we reconsidered the question of roads, and decided we must go back and risk the village. But it was essential to make less noise, and so, as we once more approached the cross-roads, those who were not wearing "chariqs" padded their boots with old socks, bits of shirt, and pieces of felt. It gives some idea of the absolute weariness of body which now was ours, when it is stated that it was only after much forcible persuasion from Nobby that those who would have the trouble of tying on the padding could be induced to take this precaution. But in the end wise counsels prevailed, and we succeeded in passing through the village—and it was a large one—without causing any apparent alarm. Looney, however, lost one of his mufti hats with which he had padded one of his boots.

The track now increased in width to as much as ten feet, being roughly levelled out of the solid rock, and running along a ledge above a precipitous ravine. Below us we heard the roar of a mountain stream, and as at one point a rough path had been cut down to water-level, Cochrane descended it and fetched up a chargal full of water. It was to prove a serious mistake that we did not fill all our receptacles here. On resuming our way, we were taken by our road over another striking bridge which crossed the ravine a little higher up. This time the arch was a pointed one. Once more we found the defile unguarded. We were probably in magnificent mountain scenery, but could see little of it, as the moon had not yet risen. Even though after crossing the bridge we waited in the warmth of a little cave till after the time of moonrise, the moon itself did not become visible until two hours later, so steep were the slopes on every side of us. We could see, however, that we were going round the eastern shoulder of the ridge which had blocked our direct route, and this ridge rose sheer from the very edge of the ravine. Without a road to follow, therefore, we should have fared badly indeed. Even with it, the climb from the bridge had been severe, but on proceeding we soon came to the top of the rise and found ourselves walking on a carpet of pine-needles through a beautiful open forest. This was a wonderful contrast to the arid wastes or rugged ridges across which had been so many of our long and weary marches. Even here, however, the country was soon to resume its more normal aspect. We found our-

selves descending into an open valley with no signs of trees or vegetation. Our road, too, dwindled to the width and unevenness of an ordinary village track, and this it turned out to be, for it led past a few isolated huts, and finally at 1 A.M. took us into a village. A little before we had been enjoying one of the hourly halts, when in the moonlight we had seen a man approaching on a donkey; so we took to our feet and marched again in order to pass him the more quickly, which we did without a single word being exchanged.

In the village we could hear the sound of men talking and laughing together. This was rather disconcerting, as for one thing we had been hoping to find where they obtained their water. Far from finding either well or spring or stream, however, we even had some difficulty in finding the path out of the village. We were about to cut across country, and had gone so far as to climb over a hedge into some vineyards, when we recognised the path to the west of us. It worked along the side of a hill apparently towards a saddle in the steep ridge which closed the valley ahead. While we were in the vineyard we felt around for grapes, but the vines were barren; in fact the whole valley seemed waterless. We now regained the track and had nearly reached the top of the ridge when our path suddenly took into its head to start descending the valley again. Though we were loth to leave any track so long as it made some pretence of going anywhere in our direction, this was too much for our patience, and Cochrane led us due east, so as to cross the bleak ridge which bordered the valley on that side and see what the next valley could do for us. But even here our difficulties were not to end: the further hillside was rocky in the extreme and covered with scrub and stunted trees, amongst which we clambered for some two hours without finding any valley to promise easy progress in the direction of the sea. To "Kola" tablets we once more resorted. Finally, an hour before dawn, we lay down as we were, disheartened, without water, and without a road.

(To be continued.)

THE COLLAPSE.

I. THE RAISING OF THE CURTAIN.

In pre-war days Berlin's famous avenue, known as Unter den Linden, always impressed me as being symbolical of modern Germany. There the flaunting parvenu hotels of William II.'s *Industriestaat* stood cheek by jowl with the unpretentious Ministerial buildings of the Waterloo era; there great shops, tricked out with a lavish display of bronze and marble and plate-glass, were flanked by the meanest of Old Berlin drinking kens. There was always plenty of traffic in the street and on the pavements; yet, just as the shabby-looking little horse-cabs contrasted strangely with the splendid *limousines* of Berlin's merchant princes, so the shoddy dress and boorish manners of the crowd seemed to accord ill with the heavy magnificence of hotels, cafés, and shops. In fact, with its violent contrasts, its vulgarity, its haste, and its general incoherence of tendency, Unter den Linden used to be a fairly accurate symbol of that clay-footed colossus, modern Germany.

One day in the early spring of 1913 I walked down Unter den Linden with a well-known French statesman. The German Government had just introduced its measures for increasing the army, proposing to raise the money for this purpose by means of a levy on capital. As we strolled along my companion and I discussed these proposals and other aspects of German finance. With a characteristic gesture which took in the whole façade of the busy street, the shrewd old Frenchman said—

"Si la guerre éclate, jeune homme, vous verrez, tout ça s'écroulera!"

That was a true prophecy, though its fulfilment may have been delayed. The whole façade of modern Germany, as represented by the great hotels and *kolossal* night cafés of Unter den Linden, has fallen with a crash. The fabric of the Empire has been shaken to its very foundations, if not wholly destroyed. The collapse of Germany is a stupendous thing. It is its suddenness, its swiftness, its completeness which are so staggering, which make it an occurrence unique in the history of the world. The epoch-making events which have accompanied it, the defeat of the German armies, the occupation of Rhineland and Alsace-Lorraine by the Allies, and the surrender of the German Fleet, have deflected public attention from the study — no less absorbing, scarcely less thrilling—of the origins and symptoms of this mighty fall.

For fifty months Germany was a closed book to the world

without. For fifty months we were relegated to the realm of deduction and hypothesis by the iron curtain which shut out from our view the slow process of decay going forward in the German body politic. The Allies' Intelligence services contrived to keep the Supreme Command accurately posted on the progressive decline of what the Germans call "the spirit of 1914." But so long as the frontier remained closed our knowledge was not absolute, and I believe that the Germans are right in claiming that when the crash came the Allies had no idea how close the Germans were to collapse. But now the barriers are down. The Supreme War Lord is a fugitive and an outcast, his son and heir the same: his beaten generals have vanished from the light of day. The *tricouleur* floats from Strasbourg Minster and the British Foot Guards mount the watch on the Rhine. For those who, like the writer, have been with the Army of Occupation in Germany, the land of blood and iron is a closed book no more.

Its pages are gradually unfolding, and he who runs may read. The tremulously polite householder in the houses where British soldiers are quartered, the fawning shopkeeper, the tram conductor, the lady clerk in the billeting office, the papers at the newsstand, the books in the bookshop — all are individually pages of this tragic tale of the decline and fall of a great nation. It is a tragedy, as the story of every failure, of every crime, must be. And the spectacle of the ruthless retribution that has overtaken the arrogant, purse-proud, ambitious nation one used to know, is tragedy in the sense of the plays of Sophocles or Euripides. It seems to me in Germany of to-day that if you stop and listen you may hear the inexorable march of leaden-footed Destiny.

The story of Germany's collapse is the story of the military defeat of the German Armies. Of that it is too soon to write. But it is now possible to trace to its source in some measure the progressive crumbling of the German front in the field and at home, which led to Germany's military overthrow. And it is because I rejoined the British Army in France shortly after the opening of the great battle (August 1918), in which the symptoms of the deterioration of German *moral* made themselves incontrovertibly manifest, and continued with the Division for a month or so after it had taken its place with the British Army of Occupation in Germany, that I feel justified in attempting this task. The interrogation of prisoners during the fighting, conversations with all types of Germans during our march from the Ardennes to Cologne and during my stay on the Rhine, and articles in the German newspapers and magazines, furnished the material for this story of the collapse of Germany.

II. THE GERMANS ON THEIR DEFEAT.

It is a popular belief in the Allied countries that the Germans do not realise their military defeat. This is, I think, true in the case of the stay-at-home civilian of the uninformed class: it is certainly not true of the German soldier. It must be remembered that the German civilian lived in a fool's paradise for fifty months. The hoodwinking of the German public by the military authorities, of which I shall have more to say elsewhere, was successful in a measure which seems incredible. For example, the German appeal for an armistice, which to every one of us soldiers on the Western Front appeared ultimately inevitable, came upon the German public with the force of a stunning shock.

In the same way, the stay-at-home Hun has not the least conception of the detestation in which the very name of Germany is held all through the civilised world. The waiters in the Cologne restaurants and cafés talk glibly about former service in England, and look forward eagerly to a speedy return. When a waiter at the Dom Hotel, wearing the ribbon of the Iron Cross in the buttonhole of his dress-suit, voiced to me sentiments of this description, he fairly took my breath away. German naïveté takes some getting used to.

Advertisers in the Cologne newspapers ("published," as the notice printed above the title runs, "with the assent of the British military authorities") ask for lessons in commercial English. On all sides one is beset with questions as to when the inquirer may resume business relations with "my good friend" Mr X of Manchester, or "our old clients" Messrs Y of Liverpool. The Berlin 'Vossische Zeitung,' of January 16, printed two advertisements asking for the representation of German firms in Rumania "in view of the approaching peace trade." One of these advertisements was anonymous, the other was inserted by an "efficient business man settled in Bukharest, temporarily resident in Berlin." Whether the advertisers are Rumanian or not, the advertisements themselves are sufficient indication of the amazing obtuseness of the German mind.

The German civilian is equally ignorant of the fact that he lost the war because the German army was defeated. In Cologne, which is mildly Social Democrat in the working-class quarters and for the rest overwhelmingly "black" or Catholic, the collapse of the German front is attributed to the "revolutionaries" of Berlin. Berlin, let me say in parenthesis, which, as the centre of Frederician Prussia, was always unpopular outside the narrow limits of the monarchy, is now anathema to the rest of the Empire. "Our Front was never broken": "our soldiers in the

West were stabbed in the back": "the Front in the field was betrayed by the Front at home" . . . these are characteristic opinions expressed to me by farmers in the *Regierungsbezirk* or "Government" of Aix-la-Chapelle, through which we passed on our march to the Rhine, and the *bons bourgeois* of Cologne. Whereas the actual facts of the case, as must be patent to every objective-minded onlooker, are that directly Germany's military power was broken, the whole fabric resting upon it came tumbling down like a house of cards.

But the soldiers know the truth. They may, in their turn, claim that they were betrayed by the folks at home; they may point to the defection of their Allies, the Bulgarians "who wanted always to go home," the "corrupt" Turks, the "rotten Austrians"; they may urge the immensity of the odds against them. But they do not deny defeat.

"Ach! der Foch!" they sigh, and pay a frank tribute to the strategical genius which turned the German success of March into the ultimate triumph of the Allies. "The men wouldn't fight!" . . . not his (the speaker's), no, but those blackguardly Bavarians or Saxons or Prussians on the right or left or wherever it might be. From every soldier you may hear abundant confirmation of what we had already divined from the course of the operations—namely, the steady deterioration of the *moral* of the German Army.

As far as my personal observation goes, it was the final piercing of the Hindenburg Line on September 27 which set the seal of defeat on all German hopes of victory in this war. On that day our Division (the Guards) forced the passage of the Canal du Nord, the last bulwark of the Hindenburg system of defence, and carried the Flesquières Ridge beyond—that ridge which, if you remember, proved fatal to British hopes at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. It was a very stiff fight, and the enemy resisted desperately, even after the Guards were over the yawning ditch of the Canal and making for the ragged fringe of trees marking the Ridge.

That day the writer assisted at the interrogation of the prisoners of war, who were brought down as they were captured to the cage situated in a ruined orchard in the village of Demicourt. It was a curious experience, for there at the cage one had, as it were, a hand on the pulse of the German Army. The first batch of prisoners were of the normal type—wounded men captured fighting or scared creatures frightened out of their sleep in a dug-out by the apparition of a helmeted Tommy with beckoning finger. The *moral* of these men was not markedly bad. They were glad to be captured; they were sick of the war; a shrug of the shoulders, and that was all.

But as the day wore on the prisoners began to appear in droves. One Brigade of Guards captured unwounded almost an entire battalion of the Reserve

Infantry Regiment No. 228. The prisoners admitted frankly that they had not attempted to resist, that they were "fed up" with fighting, that Germany had lost the war, and that they would have deserted long since if they had had the chance. They abused their officers, and had nothing but a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders for the Kaiser. They outvied one another in their eagerness to vouchsafe military information and generally to fawn upon their captors. But these were the troops in reserve. The defenders of the Canal du Nord and of the Flesquières Ridge were for the most part already cold in death, with clutching fingers, as I saw them lying about the open after the battle or groaning and shuddering on the stretchers laid out along the sunken road outside Demicourt, where the advanced dressing station was situated.

But that day we were to have one last glimpse of the old Prussian Army. About 6 P.M. a Prussian colonel was brought down. From head to foot he was the Prussian officer as one used to know him. His flat service cap and his grey overcoat were new and glossy, a monocle was firmly screwed into his eye, and his hands were encased in clean white wash-leather gloves. With him was his adjutant, an immaculately dressed youth.

The attack upon Flesquières had been considerably delayed by a nest of machine-guns firing from Graincourt. This pompous personage in the immaculate uniform, who formally introduced himself to me as "Captain Baron von B——, 1st Uhlans of the Guard," revealed himself as the heart and soul of this defence. He was commanding that battalion of the 228th Regiment which had so ingloriously surrendered, and at his battalion headquarters had organised a stout resistance, which had held up our advance until late in the afternoon.

He was haughty and vainglorious, and talked a good deal about his feat of arms, which indeed, to tell the truth, was gallantly done. He made a great show of refusing all information of any kind, except to say that he was a cavalry officer attached to the infantry; but the humiliation of a personal search, to which I was glad to subject him, somewhat reduced his *moral*. In the outcome he relaxed considerably, and we had quite a long talk.

In the affected, snarling drawl of the old type of Prussian officer, he told me of the impossibility of getting the men to "pariren," to obey orders. He had been ordered to resist to the last, and had held out with a scratch force recruited from his battalion headquarters until they had been completely surrounded. As for the rest of the battalion . . . he cast a contemptuous glance into the crowded cage at his elbow and made a little gesture, as much as to say, "What can you expect of infantry?"

I have in mind another interview with a prisoner which

gave a further indication of the crumbling of the German front. It happened during the fighting for St Python, a village situated on the slope running up to the high ridge beyond the river Selle and adjoining the town of Solesmes.

The Guards had forced a passage of the river and gained possession of the lower part of the village while the Germans were yet in the other part. The place was full of French civilians, some dying of Spanish influenza, some already dead, many cowering in cellars, living on raw vegetables stored there, unable to stir out for the machine-gun fire which swept the streets, their refuges continually bombarded with gas shells. Hundreds of these wretched people were removed under shell-fire to a place of safety, but many obstinately refused to depart, preferring to run the risk of dying in their homes to incurring the danger of the street.

In one of these cellars of St Python, visited by our men in their work of mercy, two German soldiers were found living with a French family. In due course the prisoners were sent down to Divisional Headquarters for interrogation.

Of the one I need not speak. He was a wretched little rat of a man, a transport driver or something of the sort. It is of the other I wish to tell. He was a fine broad-shouldered East Prussian, with an honest open face. He wore the greenish-grey uniform of the Garde-Jäger.

Now the Garde-Jäger are one of the crack German rifle regiments. They are picked men recruited from the forester class, many of them foresters, or sons of foresters, in the Royal Prussian Domains. The regiment used to be stationed at Potsdam, and ever enjoyed the especial favours of William II.

The prisoners' story was that, coming back from leave, they had failed to find their respective units, and after wandering about the place had taken refuge for the night in the cellar in St Python, where they were eventually discovered and captured. They had stayed in the cellar for six days. According to their statement the civilians in the cellar had supplied them with food during this time.

The whole story sounded rather improbable, so we sent the transport man outside and interrogated the rifleman more closely, alone. Asked why he had not come out of his cellar and joined the German troops, he replied that he could not, as the British were in the village. Why then, we persisted, had not the civilians come out? Because, was his embarrassed reply, there were German troops in the street outside.

Then we put it straight to the man that he was a deserter, and, after some denial, and shamefacedly, he admitted it.

"Why did you desert?" we asked him, "and leave your comrades in the lurch?"

"I've been fighting for four years," was the man's sullen reply, "and I'm sick of the war. I'm not going to fight any more!"

This was a Prussian Guardsman, and a regular soldier to boot!

Many prisoners and German ex-soldiers with whom I talked in Germany roundly declared that it was the tanks which gave us the superiority over the Germans in the field. The men simply wouldn't face them. At the house of the Mayor of a village across the Rhine, near the extremity of the bridgehead zone, I met a German-American who, holiday-making in Germany in the summer of 1914, was overtaken by the war and called up to his regiment. He was an arch-Hun of the shaven head and bulging brows type, bitter and hostile. About the origin of the war he was not interesting, ascribing the outbreak to French plans of aggression against "peaceful Germany." He was highly critical of the policy of the German Government towards the United States, declaring that Germany has made nothing but mistakes. "We always make mistakes," he added bitterly.

In his opinion it was the tanks that took the heart out of the German Army in the West. He declared that their moral effect was tremendous, especially as the men knew that they had no adequate measures of defence against them. Despite all statements to the contrary, the German High Command was in consternation at their appearance, because they knew that Germany had not the material to construct tanks of her own.

Before leaving this aspect of the German collapse, let me lift the curtain for an instant and show you what a competent German writer narrates regarding the events leading up to Germany's final defeat in the West. In the December number of the 'Deutsche Rundschau' Richard Fester writes:—

"The first spring offensive (of 1918) showed the heroes of three years' defensive battles to be at the height of their warlike efficiency. The losses, however, necessitated the despatch of drafts and reserves. A continuous offensive, as Foch was able to risk later on, was no longer possible. Already the pauses in our attacks gave rise to anxiety. When the third July offensive collapsed, because the right flank of the wedge pushed forward across the Marne failed to withstand the anticipated French counter-stroke, and when, after August 8th, the general retreat set in, the premonition of a catastrophe flashed across all German minds. But still the old fighters of the Western front held their own. Some infantry regiments were reduced to eighty men. The artillery and machine-gun companies vied with one another in their courage to the death. It was only, thanks to them, that the Western front, falling slowly back, was never broken through and rolled up. . . ."

Regarding the German request for an armistice, the writer says:—

"That Ludendorff submitted the request and put it through with the Kaiser, Hindenburg, Count Hertling, Hintze, and Count Roedern appears certain. Until he has spoken, we are relegated to surmises regarding his motives. At the beginning of October the military situation was black. The powerful assault on Cambrai not only obliged our hard-pressed right wing to fall back to the Lys and the Scheldt, but also threatened our actual line of communications. A week later the peril was averted by the lasting resistance at Cambrai.

On October 2nd maybe the squeezing-out and capitulation of a part of the Western front had to be reckoned with. The tension would only be slackened and a catastrophe averted by an armistice if the enemy accepted it immediately. In such cases, however, the cessation of hostilities is usually the prelude to capitulation. The French army at Sedan only escaped annihilation by the cessation of hostilities before it laid down its arms. Was the situation at Cambrai so bad as to justify the desperate resolve to expose the Empire itself to the risk of catastrophe in order to save a portion of the army? *Or did Ludendorff only then become conscious of the fact that he was no longer master of the army, and that a general collapse might be expected in the event of the breaking of our front at Cambrai?"* (The italics are mine.)

At what moment Ludendorff discovered that the German Army had got out of control I am unable to say. By the time the Allies had broken the Hindenburg Line at the end of September 1918, however, the erosion of the German front in the field and at home was complete. The spirit of 1914 was dead and buried with the myriad corpses of those German victories which had brought Germany no nearer the end of the war. In order to paralyse the resistance of the Russians the German Government deliberately encouraged fraternisation between the German and Russian armies after the cessation of hostilities, and thereby infected German troops with the poison of Bolshevism, which in due course these same troops carried with them to the Western front. The Bolshevik bacillus found a fertile culture awaiting it in the angry resentment both at home and in the field at the glaring injustice of the food distribution, and in the suspicion dawning to certainty in the minds of the German people that for four years their Government had kept them forcibly penned up in a fool's paradise.

III. FOOD "GRAFTING" AT HOME AND IN THE FIELD.

When we crossed the Belgian frontier into Germany in the middle of December 1918, there were few outward signs of the shortage of food. In the rural districts geese, ducks, poultry, and rabbits were to be seen at many of the farms, and in the little country towns decent meals at not too extortionate prices (but about 50 per cent higher than in peace time) were to be had. The peasants looked healthy enough and the children were plump and rosy.

But a farmer I met at Hellenthal uttered a note of warning.

"In the country," he said, "we manage all right, or anyway not too badly. The one gives the other of his superfluity, and thus, by a system of barter, we receive sufficient of the necessities of life. But wait till you get to the *Grossstadt* . . . to Cologne, for instance. It is in the cities that one finds the poor, and during the war, *mein Gott!* it is the poor who have gone hungry."

In that one phrase, "It is the poor who have gone

hungry," the farmer of Hellenthal summed up the story of Germany's fall. Throughout Germany's fifty lean months, power or the full purse was the only passport to plenty. The high officers at home and officials of State, the war profiteers, the food dealers, the farmers, the rich *embusqués* ate their bellies full. They had to pay their shot, but they did not need to go hungry. But the men whom the Government took for the army, the hundreds of thousands of volunteers into the bargain, who exchanged their civilian jobs for the miserable pittance of the soldier, had to see their families go hungry while the stay-at-homes waxed fat.

Members of the British Army of Occupation have made light of the alleged famine in Germany, because they are able to purchase a good meal at hotels and restaurants in the towns all through the occupied zone. But during the strictest period of rationing in England there were restaurants and clubs where you could get your cut off the joint "and come again," as the saying is, and no "damn nonsense" about meat-cards.

The hotel "ramp" in Germany, as any intelligent German will tell you, was one of the scandals of the war. The hotels in the large cities are alleged to have made all kinds of contracts, for the most part clandestine, with the food traffickers to keep their establishments supplied with food. The large capital at the command of most of these hotels enabled them easily to outbid other less wealthy bidders. The Bürgermeister of a village outside Cologne assured me that during the war gangs of thieves haunted the countryside stealing cattle, slaughtering them on the spot and cutting them up, to sell the carcasses to the large hotels in the cities. On two occasions, he said, he lost oxen in this way, finding only the horns, hoofs, and parts of the offal lying in the fields the next morning. The Government was frequently and urgently appealed to to put a stop to this food trafficking by the hotels. Nothing was ever done. In many cases the German Government's anxiety to keep up appearances (and hotels are a most important part of the national window-dressing) even outweighed its haunting dread of public disturbances . . . what the Germans call *die Furcht vor der Strasse.*

"Hardly has the war started," writes Dr Josef Hofmiller in the current number of the 'Süddeutsche Monatshefte,' a quarterly review published at Leipzig and Munich, "than the uncontrolled arrogance of the military supply offices drove prices senselessly and immeasurably upward. Money was thrown in handfuls out of the window, there was suddenly no question of cost, the streets were paved with gold. The 'crooks' did not wait to be asked twice. There was a wild burst of money-making. There were perfect orgies of profiteering and usury. One 'war company' after the other sprang up, rented a big Berlin hotel, sat down in leather arm-chairs smoking Havana cigars, sent prices soaring up and ruined the market. And public opinion was gagged. All Germany expected, all Germany would have rejoiced, if at last a few dozen

gallows had been erected in a public place and a few dozen prominent profiteers strung up. Nothing happened. Dividends were poured out until the board-room tables groaned, while the lower and middle classes sank into beggary. Over night a race of war profiteers had sprung up, spending, swilling, thrusting themselves forward everywhere barefacedly and cynically in the theatres, the cafés, the restaurants, the watering-places, but above all, in the Government offices. . . . Every day one heard it said, 'If a man doesn't make money now, he's a —— fool.'[1] Nine-tenths of the German people were —— fools; but the rest sucked themselves as full as leeches. Every time men came home on leave they saw that the conditions of life at home were far, far worse; but that many people were far, far better off. Their luxuriousness cried aloud to Heaven, their dinners were costlier and more extravagant, their women's fashions smacked more than ever of the *cocotte*, their clothes (of pre-war cloth) were more expensive, their jewels more ostentatious. . . . Out there we conquer to death, here at home we are organised to death. What has become of the immeasurably abundant fruit crop of the last few years? A poor woman cannot buy more than a pound of fruit except at luxurious prices. But she must buy the filthy war jam and the filthy imitation honey in order that her children shall not starve and that a few more crooks may become millionaires."

"Is it not a fact," hotly demands another writer in an article written in October 1918, but then suppressed by the Censor—

"that since the introduction of meatless weeks innumerable families of small officials in the large towns have suffered the bitterest want, while in the country and the small towns enormous quantities of meat have been consumed two or three times daily? . . . Is it not a fact that in innumerable small towns people still eat what they like without ration cards? Is it not a fact that a roaring trade in ration cards goes on between country and town? Is it not a fact that bread and meat cards may be bought by the pound—the pound of paper, I mean—in regions where the cards have not been officially issued at all, or at any rate only for corrupt purposes? Is it not true that this corruption has eaten its way upwards to the food control centres and the municipal offices? Is not all this true? Does any man dare dispute these facts? Nobody dares!"

That a vast clandestine trade in food was carried on between rich people in the towns and the farmers I know to be true from my personal experience. A certain mess in Cologne was situated in the villa of a rich parvenu, who was alleged to have made a fortune out of profiteering in eggs during the war. The house in question was stacked with food of all kinds, and even a roccoco cabinet in the drawing-room contained a *cache* of Stollwerck's chocolate, which, although manufactured in Cologne, is actually unobtainable in the shops. The lady of the house had a wonderful organisation for obtaining food from farms for miles round Cologne. No doubt, with a view to protecting her own hoard of potatoes from possible inroads by the mess in question, she placed her organisation at the disposal of the Mess President. She even went so far as to give precise details as to where individual farmers might be

[1] This appears to me to be the nearest colloquial rendering of the highly unparliamentary phrase employed in the original: "dummes Luder."—V. W.

likely to conceal their best potatoes.

Dr Hofmiller, the writer already quoted, passes from the abuses in the food situation at home to a vigorous indictment of the scandals at the Front.

"No word of execration is too strong," he avers, "for those who have on their conscience the destruction of the spirit of August (*i.e.*, of August 1914) in the Army."

He gives warning of a great awakening to be brought about by a flood of "war books," —"not the sentimental manœuvre novelettes of the penny-a-liners who have watched the war through field-glasses," but books in which "we shall hear something about the training of the men, the 'barrack-square tone' in the field, the non-promotion of the older soldiers, the one-year volunteer system which puts half-boys in command of grown men, the feeding of the officers and their men, military bureaucracy, the distribution of Iron Crosses *en masse* to *embusqués*, the beggarly pittances of some, the gigantic salaries of others, the sending home of food supplies, the pilfering of comforts and field post parcels, the field punishments, the 'tragedy' of the lines of communication, the battles for French and Rumanian harlots, the non-utilisation of available weapons, the waste of money, the destruction of food, the waste of man-power."

The same review publishes, from a soldier who had been in the field since August 14, 1914, a letter dated Charleroi, October 18, foretelling that, thanks to militarism, "despondency, lack of discipline, and sabotage" will soon make their appearance in the German Army.

"You laugh!" the writer continues, "but I will prove it to you. Think of the days of the declaration of war! What enthusiasm! Think of our victories! What was our reward? Doubly strict discipline, and private soldiers reckoned less than cattle. Any man preferred to be in the worst part of the line rather than in rest, because everybody knew that rest means drill, drill to the uttermost extreme. Take the officers. Not all, but two-thirds of them, started restaurants for themselves which were nothing more than guzzling establishments. By requisitioning cattle they secured for themselves the best food, whilst the soldier waited at table. The hotel-keeper started to keep pigs and poultry, and while the 'Herren,' as the officers were called, banqueted, the soldiers received such rations as were left over for them. White bread and rolls are only for the 'Herren.' Fifteen bakeries have already been erected for this purpose on the Lines of Communication. The poor at home are starving, while here the 'Herren' live like fighting-cocks. As for the Lines of Communication, things are far worse. I could furnish you with evidence to show that every officer, every supply inspector, in fact, every one who has anything to do with food, deserves to be shot immediately. The roguery passes all limits. From general to corporal, I, and thousands of us, can give you the proofs."

Did this letter stand alone, it might be dismissed as the "grousing" of a discontented private soldier. But it does not stand alone. I have heard the same story many times from prisoners of war, have listened to fierce outbursts of denunciation by the men of their officers "who sent the

soldier's rations home to their own families," or actually even to food traffickers and by officers of "die Etappen-Herren" —the officers employed on the Lines of Communication.

A German Army doctor, who is described as having served for forty months at the Front, including twenty-eight months in the West, in the course of a study of the causes of the German collapse, devotes considerable space to a detailed account of the food scandals in the field. His article, which is entitled "The Crumbling of the Front," is contributed to that South German quarterly, the 'Süddeutsche Monatshefte,' from which I have already quoted.

He describes the German system, by which the so-called *Divisions-Intendantur*, or supply centre for the troops, is located at Divisional Headquarters. The *Divisions-Intendant* has charge of the distribution of the rations, but also looks after the canteens and generally administers the extra supplies which units may purchase either to improve their fare or to add to their personal comfort. In other words, the *Divisions-Intendant* appears to combine in himself the functions of the Senior Supply Officer and the officer in charge of the Soldiers' Club and Canteen in a British Division.

The writer accepts it as more or less inevitable that, in the distribution of meat, the Divisional staff should get the best "cuts," also that any surplus meat left over after distribution should make its way to the same destination. As with meat, so with butter, lard, eggs, and flour. The only exception (the writer says) is ration bread (*Kommiss-Brod*).

"I am acquainted with Divisional staffs," he continues, "where ration bread is only known by hearsay, or only appreciated if served as black bread (*Pumpernickel*) after dinner: in other words, Divisional staffs where rolls and white bread of the whitest flour are served five times a day—that same white bread which the troops can only obtain by direct order of the medical officer to the *Intendantur*, and then only in insufficient quantities."

The good fare found at the tables of Divisional staffs in the German Army is attributed to "little dodges," such as the award of the Iron Cross (First Class) to the *Intendant* "for good services in maintaining the fighting capacity of the troops by tireless devotion to the work of supply." The award, the writer argues, can only be based on one of two possibilities: either the troops were splendidly fed, in which case the Divisional staff were even better supplied; or the troops were *not* splendidly fed, in which case the staff certainly were. There is no third possibility, for if both troops and staff were moderately fed, or if the troops had been splendidly, the staff moderately, fed, the award would not have been made.

The writer cites the case of a Divisional *Intendant* receiving the Iron Cross (First Class) when the Division had come back to rest after severe

fighting, in which the wretched ration arrangements and the obvious incompetence of the *Intendant* had caused great bitterness among the troops. The decoration was conferred in the face of complaints about the ration arrangements reaching the Division daily from battalion commanders and doctors. The writer regards it as symptomatic of the apathy of the army towards a universal scandal that the glaring injustice of this particular award evoked no protest.

The writer proceeds to give further instances of what he calls "demonstrably illegal, criminal acts designed to further luxurious living." During an attack delivered by the Corps with which his regiment was serving, large stocks of good claret in bottles were captured by the battalion to which he was attached. The battalion, believing they had a perfect right to the wine, carried it back with them to their rest billets after the battle. Shortly afterwards the Corps ordered the wine—or what was left of it—to be handed in, on the grounds that, as all battalions had not been lucky enough to make such a good haul, the wine was to be equally divided amongst all units in the Corps.

The good claret was handed in, and the wine ultimately served out to the original captors as their share of the spoil proved to be an indifferent vintage and only a little of that.

"Two years and a quarter later," the doctor goes on to say, "I noticed in the mess of a field ambulance which had belonged to the Corps at the time of the incident I have narrated, a bottle of this very claret. It was provided by the O.C. of the ambulance, who at the period referred to had been in charge of the supply services (*Wirtschaftsbetriebe*) of the Corps. In reply to my inquiry, the officer in question said he had bought the wine at the Corps Headquarters' mess as part of the supply captured by my battalion. Comment is needless."

Whilst attached to a casualty clearing station, the writer lived in a house where a number of N.C.O.'s attached to a Divisional Headquarters established in the place were billeted. The contrast between their fare and his, he says, was as a nobleman's to a workman's. While at the hospital mess only artificial milk and imitation coffee were served, the Divisional staff were getting real coffee and cream daily. This was at a time when the doctors were fighting desperately to get the necessary milk for patients seriously ill with kidney disease.

At the time of the spring offensive of 1918 a certain unit came out to rest after three weeks' hard fighting. The food was very bad, and both officers and men gladly consumed the flesh of dead horses.[1] The writer gives the menu of a dinner served during this

[1] During our advance from the Canal du Nord to Maubeuge we had an infallible method for telling whether the horses lying dead on the roads were British or German. The German horses—*i.e.*, the horses killed whilst the position was still in German hands—had almost invariably the flesh of the rump

time at the mess of the inspector of a "Corps slaughter column," to which two of his brother officers were invited. The fare provided consisted of: beefsteak, sauce tartare; ox tongue aux légumes; buffet froid; cheese straws. Bottled beer was served with the meal, and everybody got as much to eat and drink as he wished; in fact, one of the two guests, "an extraordinarily large eater, was unable to eat anything even at dinner on the following evening." Hospitality reached its zenith at the conclusion of this Gargantuan repast with the present to every officer of three "large pieces of bacon fat" and several blood sausages.

The "heavy eater" had to pay the penalty for his incautious boastings about this orgie of food. He was promptly sent by his C.O. to the giver of the feast with a polite request of a present of meat for the mess. He brought back in triumph 25 lbs. of fresh meat and stated he could have had more if he had wanted it.

"Where," asks the writer of the article shrewdly, "did the cheese straws at the feast come from? From the Corps bakery column in exchange for meat. Whence the beer? From the supply office against similar compensation. But where did the enormous supply of meat come from?"

That the writer declares is the surplus resulting from the General Army system of allotting to each Corps slaughter column a number of head of live oxen in accordance with the daily ration strength. Naturally, distribution on these lines cannot be exact. There must always be something over, and once the oxen have been slaughtered, the meat cannot be kept. That the best portions of the meat are invariably to be found among this surplus can hardly, the writer says, be ascribed to chance.

. . . . . .

What must strike the Anglo-Saxon observer about all these comments on the German food distribution at home and in the field is their intense bitterness. To some people it may appear far-fetched to attribute the crumbling of the German Front to as relatively an unimportant thing, according to British or American ideas, as the distribution of food. But in Germany throughout the war the food question has been the all-important issue dominating everything, even questions of strategy. One must have been hungry to appreciate the tremendous importance of food, and under stress of war conditions few of us have actually known physical want.

To the German civilian, under the growing pinch of the Allied blockade, the food question became the main issue of existence. The rich fought for their comfort, the poor for their children. Class hatred was

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sliced away. The peasants told us that it was a common thing to see German soldiers precipitate themselves on the bodies of horses while the flesh was yet warm, almost before the smoke of the shell that killed them had blown away. Near Quiévy I saw a transport horse thus mutilated, with the driver dead on its back, his feet still in the stirrups.—V. W.

fanned, new animosities sprang up (the feud between town and country is a chapter by itself), old friendships were severed, the very foundations of society were shaken, in the scramble after the next meal.

Handled wisely, democratically, the situation was difficult enough to cope with, but interwoven as it was with the whole meshwork of the German bureaucratic system and complicated by the Government's "dread of the street," the food shortage in Germany finally ranked second only to the Allies' force of arms as the decisive factor in the German defeat.

IV. THE HOODWINKING OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE.

Just as the German Government at home made no move until it was too late to adjust the form of Government to modern democratic ideas, so the German military authorities continued to maintain in the midst of the levelling influences of the world war (nowhere more in evidence than on the Western Front) the cast-iron framework of the military system. The censorship, covering all fields of thought, ruled out discussion of any kind. The safety-valve of the press was sealed up. The people on the one side knew nothing of the real state of affairs. The Government, on the other, was utterly out of touch with the current drift of public opinion.

Of the hoodwinking of the army in the field as of the public at home by the Government, the army doctor, from whose article I have already reproduced some passages, has something to say:—

"However despairing the battle reports sent in," he says, "they almost always evaporated *en route*, or at the most died away by the time they had reached Divisional Headquarters. The Divisional staff was always far too prone to attribute them to personal embarrassment or even cowardice. It is not to be wondered at that, often enough, the troops are convinced that considerations of a highly personal nature are responsible for hardening the incurable egoism of their leaders. That the Supreme Command—aye, even the Imperial Government itself—so often loses all sense of proportion and sacrifices so many lives in useless operations, is due to the tendency to suppress or to colour reports in quarters most qualified to keep General Headquarters accurately and impartially informed. . . . Again and again public opinion has been led astray by its creator the Press, rendered irresponsible by censorship; again and again the fighting troops have been led astray by orders and secret orders, by speeches and every imaginable form of propaganda, in a degree which has aroused the deepest astonishment of every intelligent human being. Verdun and the Somme, the U-boat war and the 'Kaiser Battle,'[1] are eloquent witnesses for the truth of my allegation. The confusion of the power of judgment with pessimism, *défaitisme*, and want of patriotism (*Vaterlandslosigkeit*[2]), and of lack of judgment with optimism, conviction, and patriotism, which have been wildly indulged in at home and in the field, has made itself bitterly felt."

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[1] The name given by official Germany to the German offensive of March 1918.

[2] Cf. the Kaiser's reference to the Social Democrats as "vaterlandslose Gesellen"—fellows without a fatherland.

Thus both at home and in the field the soil was thoroughly well prepared for the seeds of revolution and anarchy. The German Independent Socialists on the one side, the Allied propaganda on the other, worked for the disintegration of the German front in the West with different means. If not the actual theory of Bolshevism, then at least ideas borrowed from the Bolshevists—or, more properly, from the spectacle of the Bolshevised Russian army—were imported to the Western front by the troops transferred thither from the East.

But the German Socialist minority had long been working on discontented spirits at home and in the field. As far back as 1915 a pamphlet protesting against a second winter campaign was widely circulated. It declared the statement that the enemy did not want peace to be "an audacious lie." Another pamphlet, entitled 'Pictures without Words,' showed Rosa Luxembourg and Clara Zetkin, the well-known German Extremists, in jail; and Scheidemann, David, Ebert, and Schopflin, the Majority Socialists, as guests at the Kaiser's Headquarters.

Richard Fester, who quotes from these pamphlets in the 'Deutsche Rundschau,' declares that the Russian Revolution gave the agitation of the Independent Socialists a new direction. He regards the Russo-German fraternisation in the spring of 1917 as an unintelligible mistake of the German Supreme Command.

"The first *rapprochement*, started by the officers and taken up by the men, was intended to paralyse the war zeal of the Russian Revolutionary Government by increasing the 'war weariness' of the Russian Army. But at the next fraternisation in December 1917, after Russia's second defeat, Bolshevik peace propaganda had already to be guarded against. With amazed eyes our soldiers saw an army which had become leaderless overnight. The treatment of the officers, stripped of their badges of rank and mishandled by their men, gave an idea of the power of the masses. A workmen's strike was a familiar thing. A strike of soldiers was something new, expressing for the first time the idea that the man employed on the modern war machine is also only a workman. Even though the discipline of the German Army showed no outward signs of slackening, an internal transformation took place. . . . The reinforcements sent to the Western front brought a new spirit back with them to Germany and the West."

I should mention here that in their peace propaganda among the troops the Independent Socialists appear to have made extensive use of a story, seemingly based on a statement published by a certain Professor von Schultze-Gävernitz, to the effect that in 1916 Great Britain made an offer of peace to Germany which was rejected. This report was widely believed among German soldiers at the Front. A workman, writing from the field on October 30, 1918, to a friend in Germany, says:—

". . . It is high time we had peace and were free. America wants nothing from us: she is willing to conclude peace with the people, and only the Kaiser, Hindenburg, and Ludendorff stand in the way. . . . Why was peace not concluded in 1916? England offered Germany

peace, but the Kaiser and his Government would not have it, and the people were told nothing about it. Everything remains as it was. The Junkers and the militarists will not give up hope. They want to drive the whole nation to destruction and starvation. What will happen in the spring? We have nothing worth living for. The enemy is overcoming us, for the odds against us are too great for any further resistance to be made. By the spring we shall certainly be forced to make an unconditional surrender."

The Independent Socialists made great play in their pamphlets with the fable that the revolution in Germany would be inevitably followed by revolutions in the countries of the Entente. A pamphlet issued in the summer of 1917, ostensibly by German prisoners of war interned in Switzerland, addressed to their "comrades at the Front and brethren in uniform," prophesied: "On the day on which the Berlin Tsar falls we shall be as much loved in Paris and London, New York and Rome, as the Russian workmen and soldiers are loved in Germany to-day." That the enemy will tear Germany to pieces is declared to be an idle story. "We need not fear a Polish or an Alsatian plebiscite if the Junker régime falls and these fellow-citizens of ours are free and contented."

"Faced with the German Republic," runs another brochure, an appeal sent out in January 1918 to all workmen to support the general strike, "the Western States, now menaced by our absolutism and imperialism, will be forced by the workmen of these countries to lay down their arms immediately. The revolution of the proletariat in Germany signifies the revolution of the working classes throughout the world."

Richard Fester, who gives extracts from these pamphlets in the 'Deutsche Rundschau,' rightly says that these flyleaves, chronologically arranged, tell the whole story of the German revolution.

The leadership of the strike movement of January 1918, which was speedily suppressed, was, he observes, wholly in the hands of the Independent Socialists. A strike manifesto, issued at this time, said:—

"Above all things, see that the news of the general strike reaches the trenches at the Front, and finds a mighty echo, that men on leave everywhere make common cause with the strikers, visit the strikers' meetings, and take part in the street demonstrations."

"Comrades, awake!" begins a pamphlet intended for circulation at the Front and along the Lines of Communication—"the officers have good and abundant food, elegant quarters, clothing, and footwear, and in addition, high pay, with allowances and privileges of every kind. We private soldiers and N.C.O.'s are miserably paid, shamefully fed and clothed, and live for the most part in wretched quarters. Equal pay, equal food, and the war would long since have been a memory."

This incitement to class war between officers and men (which, by the way, is a leaf lifted almost bodily from the book of Bolshevism) met with no immediate response at the Front, as the good *moral* of the German Army in the offensive of March seemed to show. But this and similar pamphlets undoubtedly left behind a decided impression, enormously deepened by the skilful propaganda of the Allies, as was revealed by the disorderly scenes, the killing of officers, and the destruction of military

effects which marked the German retreat in the following autumn.

The unerring genius directing the Allied, especially the British, propaganda, is frankly admitted by the Germans.

"The only Prince the mass of the people trust," writes Professor Cossmann in a powerful article, entitled 'Collapse,' in the 'Süddeutsche Monatshefte,' "is Prince Lichnowsky, the only nobleman they believe Lord Northcliffe. . . . Like the politicians, the industrialists, the schools, and the whole of the German world of learning have utterly failed in the work of 'explaining the war' (Aufklärung) to our people. While the war was still on, a leading German publishing house demanded that the editor of a series of editions for schools of French authors should cut out all 'anti-German' passages. Thus even in the children a false picture of the feeling existing against us in France was sedulously implanted. . . . We waited for the man of note who was to take charge of the work of propaganda amongst our people. We found him in Lord Northcliffe."

V. THE APATHY OF DESPAIR.

The zones occupied by the Allies in Germany are shut off from the Empire outside. Therefore I am prepared to believe that impressions gathered on the Rhine may not be representative of the situation elsewhere in Germany. But the Berlin papers still come to Cologne, and I have searched them in vain for indications of such a revolutionary spirit, say, as vibrates through the gazettes and broadsides of the French Revolution. Rather the longing for the restoration of order, the yearning for reconstruction, are revealed in the tone of the Berlin press.

As for the occupied territory, I find it impossible to imagine anything less like a land in the throes of revolution than this fair province of the Rhine. Far from there being any outward signs of Bolshevism, Bolshevism is the universal bogey. The inhabitants in town and country have got over their terrors of "reprisals" by the Allied troops, and appear to be actually enjoying the peace and quiet which the presence of the Allied forces procures them.

As far as I am qualified to judge from a long acquaintance with Germany and the German people, the German revolution is not a living force. If revolt had been in the blood of this, the most docile, the most characterless of peoples, it would have risen up ere this against kings and tyrants. The Emperor's throne was toppled over, and the thrones of his brother monarchs in Federal Germany followed suit, because this was the only means by which the mass of the German population hoped that they might end the war. Matters had reached such an unbearable pitch that the offer of a crust of bread, coupled with specious promises about the imminence of revolution in the Allied countries, sufficed to sway the mob to any violent act calculated to procure them alleviation.

The seeds of revolt were planted by the sheer inepti-

tude of the German Government. The tidal wave which made such a clean sweep of the German princes carried up to their thrones the agitators who had used the blunders of the Emperor and his advisers to compass their own ends. But the prevailing spirit in Germany is not revolution. It is weariness. It takes the form of dull apathy in some, black despair in others.

The character of the German people has not changed. The Lord High Panjandrum has gone; but his mandarins, the *Beamtentum*, remain. Save for occasional acts of violence, principally due to the unimaginable folly of the revolutionary zealots in opening the jails in the first rush of Germany's new-born liberty, life proceeds on the old lines. Taxes are paid regularly, policemen continue to bully the crowd, long queues of people, ox-like in their uncomplaining patience, form up in all docility, whether it is to buy a stamp at the post-office or book a seat for the opera.

The German was wont to fawn and grovel before the military. In the occupied territory he does so still, with the difference that the soldier now wears khaki instead of field-grey. When in a rural district an officer reported to the Bürgermeister that a man had ignored the British order that German civilian males should take their hats off to British officers, that worthy promptly told the complainant that he ought to have knocked the offender's hat off (*den Hut herunterboxen*) (sic)!

That attitude, so wholly representative of the relations between officialdom and people in monarchical Germany, does not encourage the belief that any great change has taken place in the national mind.

Take this advertisement, culled from a recent number of the 'Vossische Zeitung,' published in "revolutionary" Berlin:—

> "For Princes, Counts, the highest officials, large landed proprietors, high officers (including those disabled in the war), also for other gentlemen belonging to the most exclusive circles of society, of every age and religion.
>
> "Distinguished Spouses Can Be Obtained through Frau Martin, 216, Kurfürstendamm."

That advertisement, with its truly Prussian mixture of vulgarity and snobbishness, smacks far too much of the old Germany for me to believe that the German revolution is a real thing.

No, the German people is waiting for a lead, no matter in what direction, so long as it restores to them that peace and prosperity they so recklessly squandered. People may try to make our flesh creep with stories of the secret organisation of the German Army, but while no measure of precaution should be neglected by the Allies, I firmly believe there is not an ounce of fight left in the German people.

The note of many of the press comments is one of undisguised despair.

"We are wholly in the hands of our foes," writes Professor Cossmann, in his article 'Collapse.' "If they do not furnish us with raw materials, hundreds of thousands of textile workers will be thrown out of employment as soon as the military stocks are used up. Hundreds of thousands in the iron industry will be out of work if the Lorraine ore is taken away from us, and the import of Swedish ore stopped. Hundreds of thousands in the chemical industry will lose their employment, because in Japan, America, and England chemical industries have arisen and captured a part of the world trade. Provided that it is permitted and we are not called upon to perform menial services as slaves in the war zones, we therefore anticipate emigration *en masse* in a volume, and under conditions unfavourable for Germanism (*Deutschtum*) such as we have never experienced."

The Professor sums up the views of "many Germans" by saying that they regard the German people as not only incapable of existence, but also unworthy of existence.

"They declare that a race which behaved as non-combatant Germany behind the Front behaved deserves to go under. Everything for which our people was renowned, stability, loyalty, it lacks. Its enthusiasm is only a flash in the pan. They point to the French in the territory occupied by the Germans, on whose lips never a word of repining was heard; to the Italians, who, after the greatest defeat in their history in the previous year, did not dream for an instant of peace or the renunciation of their war aims; to the Belgians, the Serbians, the Montenegrins, who, even after the whole of their territory had been conquered, were not willing to make a separate peace. Never before has a nation cast its weapons from it, never before had a nation thrown over its leaders and begged for mercy as the Germans did."

The writer admits that the above sentiments probably correctly sum up the impression produced abroad by the German collapse.

"During the war," he continues, "the hate which surrounded us at the outbreak gave place to admiration for our military achievements, mingled with contempt for our political actions, but at the Revolution these sentiments were replaced by a feeling of undisguised disgust. In the eyes of the English, any one who at such a moment levels accusations against his fellow-countrymen is no gentleman. Such things as the fawning on prisoners or the threat that Bolshevism will spread to England produces only the silence of unmixed contempt."

In conclusion, let me quote the Foreword to Professor Cossmann's article:—

"Our first greeting after the collapse is to those who fought for us, who on sea and land and in the air stood firm against the superiority of the whole world, and to those who languish in enemy captivity.

"It was all in vain.

"But the lowest form of gratitude is that measured by success. Let us measure ours by their superhuman and unparalleled sufferings and achievements.

"Let the first duty of us who live to-day and of our children be to do all we can for those who took part in the war and those they have left behind them.

"Because all is lost, everything must be built up afresh, German honour as well. Let honour's first duty be to give thanks to German heroes!"

VALENTINE WILLIAMS.

"GREEN BALLS."

BY PAUL BEWSHER.

V.

COASTWISE LIGHTS.

"The cunning searchlights haunt the midnight skies,
Where chains of emerald balls of fire rise,
To mingle with the spark of bursting shells—
High in the darkness where the bomber dwells!

We know the meaning of the sudden glare
Of dazzling light which blossoms in the air:
For us the green and scarlet rockets blaze
And whisper urgent secrets through the haze."

—*The Night Raid.*

FROM the aerodrome at Dunkerque five Short night-bombing machines were operating. These were large single-engined machines with a very long stretch of wings, and, apart from the Handley-Pages, were the biggest machines in use on the Western Front, and carried the heaviest weight of bombs.

While the Handley-Pages were getting ready, these Short machines, with their ten wonderfully skilled pilots and gunlayers, slipped off unostentatiously into the dark to Bruges and Zeebrugge, night after night, and would come back to the dark aerodrome and land quietly, about two and a half hours afterwards, with their bomb racks empty.

We would crowd round curiously, eager to learn what was to face us when we started raiding on the bigger machines.

The airmen said little as they removed their helmets and coats, or drank coffee in preparation for another raid the same night.

"Bruges is getting a bit hot. Good many flaming onions to-night. Seem to be more searchlights!" was the kind of comment made.

These airmen continued their raids, a little disdainful of the fuss and excitement about the Handley-Pages. They realised that they were doing the job, and that four bombs dropped are better than fourteen about to be dropped.

When the larger machines were ready to go, it was decided that they should operate from another aerodrome near the coast in order that our own aerodrome might be left clear for the Shorts.

I was not allowed to go on the first raid, as my pilot's machine was not in action, so I drove down to the aerodrome at dusk to act as an assistant ground officer. The machines were ready in a

corner, and were to proceed to Ostend.

Night fell. The engines roared. One after the other the machines swept up and blotted out the stars in their passage. The noise of the engines died away, and the uneasy night was left undisturbed.

I climbed over the sand-dunes on to the beach, and stood looking north-east towards the lines. Far away I could see many a sign of the restless activity of the war-time night. Flash succeeded flash on the horizon, some dull and red, some brilliant and white. Here and there I could see the faint, almost invisible, arm of a searchlight waving evilly across the sky. Then I would see very slowly, very deliberately, a row of "green balls," like a string of luminous jade beads, rise up from the ground and climb up, up, up, into the darkness, begin to bend over like a tall overburdened flower, and vanish one by one. Another string would follow them, apparently on an irregular curve. Though fully twenty-five miles away, they had all the hard glitter of jewels, and were very luminous and beautiful.

As I stood watching this strange alluring sight, there were two deafening unexpected reports behind me—the most vicious urgent noises I have ever heard. I flung myself flat on the sand, face downwards, arms thrown out. Report after report followed, each one drawing nearer to me. I began to dig, in my desire to be as little higher than the ground as possible. I wished that I were a razor-shell. I felt convinced that the next bomb would be on my back. At last the succession of awful crashes stopped. I lay still, my mouth dry with fear, waiting for the fall of a "hang-up"—the most unreliable bomb of all.

However, no more explosions shook the ground, and the noise of the French anti-aircraft batteries broke the silence of the night instead. I stood up and ran back to the aerodrome, stumbling across the sand-dunes and the tufts of dry grass. In the gloom on my right I could see the black columns of smoke which tower above the ground, recording the position of the explosions.

When I reached a deep ditch, I waited a little. I did not want to cross the flat expanse of the aerodrome without feeling sure that the danger was all over. I had the same lingering desire to remain near safety that you feel when playing "musical chairs" and you are near a vacant seat.

I saw a French marine, with the fear of death in his face, coming towards me. He had probably been in the ditch. (Lucky fellow!)

"What was it? Did you hear?" he said. "Not nice, was it?"

He was evidently delighted to see somebody. He wanted the moral support of a companion—another terrified human being. I felt the

same, and was glad to see him. He looked so terrified that it made me feel I must not appear to be in the same condition.

So I replied airily—

"Oh! Not at all nice? But not very near. Not dangerous, you know!" [My heart had hardly then left my throat.] "I'm going back to the hangars!"

He walked with me. Maybe he felt that I would be some sort of cover if any more bombs were dropped. I felt the same.

Thereafter the whole night was full of hidden mysteries. In the direction of Calais, tracer shells, like curving hot coals, moved through the sky continuously. The air was full of the hum of engines. There was a talk of Zeppelins. Everything was uncertain.

Then one by one the machines returned and landed with dazzling flares blazing away beneath their wing tips.

Before dawn we drove back to our own aerodrome, and went to bed.

Our machine was ready for the next raid, and we were detailed to go to Ghent.

In order to save repetition I will describe the first raid, and include in it other incidents which happened during subsequent night trips.

I wish to draw the contrast between the first few flights, when we made mistakes, and had to find out everything by doing it—and the later trips, when we had evolved a better scheme of attack, and, knowing what to expect, countered each move of opposition before it came, almost as in a game of chess. So in this chapter I will give a composite description of earlier raids, and in my next chapter give a detailed account of a cold determined attack on a highly-fortified objective of whose defences we had gained experience.

The machines are lined up on the seaward aerodrome. I have my celluloid map-case with its coastwise map on one side, and on the other the more detailed map of the district round the aerodrome which we are to bomb.

I climb into my seat and sit beside the pilot. The door is slammed behind us. The pilot blows a whistle, and the chocks are pulled away from the wheels. With our engines running gently on either side we await the order to leave. Then, half a mile in front of us, we see the wide slow flash of a bomb. Another follows it a short time after, and then another. Each is nearer to us, and I can hear the crash of the explosions.

"Bombs!" I say to the pilot. "I don't like this! Bit rotten being bombed before we leave the ground!"

As the last bomb flashes in front of us we receive the order to start away. On go the engines with a roar, and we move across the grass. The nose drops down slightly as the tail leaves the ground and we begin to assume flying position. It is very unpleasant rushing across the dim aerodrome like this, not knowing when a bomb is going to burst on you or

near you, and conscious of the fact that somewhere in the darkness above is a German aeroplane, perhaps waiting for you.

Suddenly there is a jerk at my head, and my invaluable fur-lined mask-goggles have vanished, being snatched away by the rush of air. This means that I shall have no goggles to wear during the whole raid.

The nose shoots up into the air, and with a vibrant beat from the engines we mount into the star-bestrewn sky, and turn out over the sand-dunes towards the sea. We move away from the aerodrome at once, and the occasional red flashings of bursting bombs show us that we are wise.

Dunkerque passes on our starboard side. Its defences are very suspicious, and we are taken for a German machine. Shells begin to burst near us, though we are scarcely a thousand feet off the ground.

I load my Very's light pistol with a cartridge, and fire over the side "the colour of the night." I continue to do so until the shell-fire stops. The town lies in darkness, but I am faintly conscious of its hidden wakefulness as it lies angry and apprehensive. Below can be seen a few faint specks of light from the ships anchored, for safety's sake, off the shore.

We fly onwards along the coast, climbing steadily. We keep the pale line of the beach near enough to our starboard side to be able to follow it easily. The engines run evenly. The dials are steady. In front of us the air-speed indicator hardly wavers. It is a time, not of trouble and anxiety, but of mere waiting. The strain has not yet begun. With the near approach of the German territory the whole mental outlook of the airman changes, and every nerve automatically becomes on the alert. Now, however, there is the same sense of mild interest felt in an ordinary daytime flight over friendly territory. The country lying to our right is creditably dark. Not one gleam of light shines in the stretch of vague shadows, save where at a large coastwise munition plant a red flame leaps up for a moment and dies away.

In the far distance can be seen an occasional misty flash from the volcanic region of Ypres. A little nearer a tremulous star-shell glows white through the haze, and slowly droops and dies.

La Panne is passed, and we begin to turn out at an angle away from the coast. We are nearly six thousand feet from the ground, and are still climbing. We sweep round in three or four wide circles to gain a little more height, and then fly straight ahead.

At the end of the lines by the piers of Nieuport we are six miles or so from the coast. At Ostend I can see a vague cluster of searchlights moving restlessly and rather undecidedly across the sky, dredging the sky with their slim white arms in an evil and terrifying

manner. I ask the pilot to turn out at a sharper angle, in order that he may pass Ostend quite ten miles out to sea. There is a visible menace in searchlights, and we avoid them like poison unless it is essential to go near. It requires a very strong nerve to fly right ahead to a thicket of moving beams of light. We used to allow six or seven miles margin, and would willingly add several miles to our journey on the wrong side of the lines in order to make a detour.

As we are passing Nieuport I see two small points of light suddenly appear. They rise up and swell into two bright flares—one scarlet and one emerald. These flares die away, and at once several more searchlights become active near Middelkerke. It is the German "hostile aircraft" signal. Off Middelkerke itself we see two more flares, and when Ostend, with its forest of moving beams, lies far to our right, yet another sinister group of red and green lights rises up as we are "handed" along the coast from point to point.

Below us now is the expanse of sea. Above us are a few scattered stars, which have challenged the radiance of the moon. To the right lies the dimly seen line of the coast, fringed, as far as we can see, with a line of searchlights waving outwards over the sea. At Ostend an aerial lighthouse flashes at a regular interval, giving signals of guidance to the German aircraft abroad in the darkness. Slightly behind us are the occasional star-shells, and a hurried flash gives evidence of military activity on the land.

We are almost 8000 feet up, and with the fringe of searchlights as a barrier I am not easy in my mind.

"Pull her up to nine thousand, if you can, Jimmy; it's hardly high enough yet! Try and pull her back a bit! We'll have to cross the coast in about ten minutes."

I am feeling that my scheme of going to the objective by land was by far the best one. The coastal section of Belgium had two fronts—the trench-line from Nieuport to Ypres, and the coast-line from Zeebrugge to Nieuport. There was a strong searchlight barrier by the sea; there was none behind the German front lines. Therefore, if you were to proceed to a land objective by the sea route you had to face two organisations of defence—first at the coast, and then at the objective. If you went by the overland route you had only the searchlights at your objective to tackle. The fewer obstacles there were to meet, the better I was pleased; and I felt that it was bad management if in an attack on an objective I was troubled by the defences of any other point.

Thereafter I used the overland route, even when attacking places on the coast, until my final accident. It was as much a question of morale as anything. If you crossed the

German lines about Nieuport there was no opposition. Your lights were extinguished. You moved into an unopposing darkness. You never felt that the people below knew that you were there. Ghistelles on the left shot up a couple of towering lights, which moved vainly towards you. Thorout gave birth to one pale beam, which you might ignore. If, on the other hand, you moved down the coast, you saw that cruel waiting fence of white weeds stretching up into the dark pool of the night—a visible and threatening sign of hostile activity.

So, as we pass Ostend, I look along the coast-line with a feeling of fear. We are going to cross the shore between Zeebrugge and Ostend, at Blankenberghe, which is the most weakly defended spot.

Suddenly my pilot strikes my arm.

"Look! There's one of their patrol machines with a searchlight! There—*there*—to the left!"

I turn and see, moving very swiftly, half a mile in front of us, a brilliant light. The pilot shouts again.

"It's turning towards us! Get in the front, quick!"

I crawl through the small wooden door into the nose of the machine, and unstrapping the Lewis gun get it ready for action. The light sweeps round to the right, but it is going downwards, and the German airman has evidently not seen us. I wait a minute or two and examine the sky all round us, but can see nothing. With a feeling of relief I kneel on the floor and wriggle back into my seat behind.

"By *Jove!* Did you see that, Bewsh?" says the pilot. "The devil! We'll have to look out."

Ahead of us now we can see the tall powerful searchlights of Zeebrugge moving in slow sweeps over the sky. Under our right wing lies Ostend. We are off Blankenberghe, and the time has come to cross the coast. We are eight thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and are not likely to gain much more height, and, at any rate, we are anxious to get the work done and to return home.

To the right we turn and move steadily towards the waiting coast. In front of us lies the waving line of searchlights. Inland, to the left, can be seen in the distance the turmoil of Bruges. The beams of light sweep across the stars; shells burst in the sky; and now and then there float upwards strings of fantastic green balls, sparkling like gems as they bubble towards the upper levels, where they float gaily for a moment parallel to the ground before they fade away.

Below, near the coast by Blankenberghe, an aerial lighthouse flashes and flashes—*Four shorts—one long*—darkness: *four shorts—one long*—darkness. Now we are getting near to the restless weeds of light which begin to move outwards in search of us. The pilot throttles the engines slightly, for we are getting within the range of these

clutching tentacles. I feel very nervous and frightened.

On either side of us now move the slow gliding beams—broad and pale shafts of light stretching high, high up above us in the darkness, blotting out the stars, and stretching far, far beneath us to a tiny spot of light on the black edge of the coast.

With these arms of light coming up to us from the ground we begin at once to have a sense of height, which normally you never have when in the air. The searchlights, running from the earth to our level and past us, join us to the ground and give us a measure of distance and an opportunity of contrast. With these tall, enormously tall, thin pillars of light near us moving to and fro in a hypnotising swing, we feel very, very high off the ground, and realise how remote from the earth we sit on our little seats in the fragile structure of linen and steel and wood.

Beneath us now lies the vast and bottomless pool of the night sky. From the blue depths there comes pouring up, like the exhalations of some sinister sea creature in the primeval ooze, bubbles of green fire. Suddenly in the darkness appears a round bead of emerald light, another one appears beneath it, and then another, and a whole necklace pours upwards as though a string of gems had been pulled out of a fold in a black velvet cloth. In simple curves they soar past us into the upper sky, where perhaps they die out on their upward rush, or turn over and begin to drop downwards before they fade into mere red sparks falling swiftly.

Now are we towering high over the black edge of the coast in the pinnacles of the slim searchlights which challenge us in front, and move to the right and left of us. We are conscious of our hostility to those below, and rejoice to creep unseen, unnoticed, across this sentinel barrier. Around us the occasional ropes of brilliant emeralds wander upwards in regularity and silence, and for a second moment we are conscious of being in the air at night. To our left the barrage flings into the sky a dozen beams of powerful light, fortunately too remote to challenge us. To our right Ostend echoes the threat. We are just between the two danger zones, unassailable, but by a short distance only, by both of them.

I am learning the mistake of crossing the enemy's sea frontier instead of his land frontier. I am worried and harassed at the very beginning of my travel across his territory, instead of becoming settled down and used to being in an enemy sky before the visible danger of searchlights appear to challenge my passage.

We pass slowly, silently, through the suspicious beams of light. To the right and left we twist and turn as one of the swords cuts the sky near us. I draw my arms to my side to make myself smaller so that I may wriggle through

the sharp edges of danger without being touched. Apart from the risk it is exciting, though very nerve-trying. When at last we are through the barrier, and regain the undefended inland region, there is a great feeling of relief.

Our engines are opened out, and we fly level again. Beneath us are the pale roads, and the dark lines of canals, and the chiaroscuro of villages and forests. Five or six miles to our left we look down into the cauldron of Bruges. It is a wonderful and awe-inspiring sight, and as it does not threaten us to-night we look at it with keen interest. The most noteworthy feature is a vicious-looking row of four searchlights, near together and spaced at even intervals, like a line of foot-lights at a theatre. These four beams of light move across the sky in strange and unpleasant formations. Now the two end ones stand upright while the two central ones sweep forward. Now the whole four move to and fro in a determined and formidable sweep. Now the two middle ones cross each other in a gigantic X of light, and the two outer ones sweep to and fro with the beat of a mighty metronome. We called these four lights the "Lucas Cranwell" lights, as they were like a landing light set of this name which we were experimenting with on our machines. Later on in the year, to our great relief, they were removed. The moral effect of a group of lights like that is very great. You were frightened before you approached the objective. They were a clever set of lights, too, because on one occasion they were *switched* right on to our machine and held it, without any preliminary groping in the sky.

In addition to the "Lucas Cranwell" lights are five or six other powerful searchlights standing in a circle round the town, moving to and fro in a languid and sensuous way. Ferocious little spurts of light on the ground in a dozen places indicate the position of anti-aircraft guns, and here and there in the sky appear the quick and vivid flashes of the bursting shells. To complete the picture of activity the lovely necklaces of flaming jade rise up in great curves—sometimes only five or six in a string—sometimes twenty or thirty at once.

Now comes the time when I have to begin to seek my objective. Up to the present the coast-line, and the centres of activity at Ostend, Zeebrugge, and Bruges have rendered the use of a map unnecessary. I have scarcely had need to look over the side. Now, however, I have to begin to do some work.

I know by the waving searchlights that I am about six miles south of Bruges. I look over the side and see a main road running S.S.E. I identify it on the map and see that a railway should shortly appear. Soon I distinguish, with difficulty, the thin line of a railway track, which is a difficult thing to see by night or day—the best guide being any kind of

water—canals, rivers, or lakes—then a good white road, or a forest, and lastly a railway line.

We cross the railway, and I identify a branch line running away from it. We turn N.E., and at the end of seven or eight minutes I see the bold black line of a canal whose peculiar curves it is very easy to identify. The volcano of Bruges flames up into the night to our left, while beyond it we can see the aerial lighthouses of Ostend and Blankenberghe flashing regularly on the hazy horizon. Flushing sparkles cheerfully ahead of us, and along the Scheldt glitter the Dutch villages.

We turn round to the right and fly on. We are now moving on a straight course, and I identify in turn each bend in the canal, each thin road, each queer-shaped forest. The aerodrome draws near. I see in the distance the little wood near which it lies. Then I can see the pale shape of the landing-ground, which looks slightly different to the surrounding fields owing to its made-up surface. We sweep round in order to be able to face the wind and to approach it in a good line. We turn again and begin to fly straight ahead.

"I'm getting in the back now, Jimmy," I shout. "Fly straight on. If I give two greens or two reds swing her round quickly. Turn very slowly for one green or one red!"

I crawl into the back, throw myself on the floor, kick my legs out behind me, and slide to the right the door beneath the pilot's seat. A biting wind beats on to my face, making my eyes water and blowing dust all over me. I remove a safety-strap from the bomb handle to my right and look below. There lies a square of pallid moonlit country. The aerodrome is not in view yet. I push my head out, turn it sideways, and look forward.

A mile or two ahead I see the little forest. I try to calculate whether we are steering straight for it or not. It seems to me that we are flying too much to the left. I pull myself inside the machine again, take off a glove, shine a torch on a little row of buttons on the frame of the door, and press the button on the right. A green light glows in the cockpit, and, looking at the bomb-sight, I see that the machine is swinging towards the right.

I poke my head through the bottom of the machine again and see the position of the aerodrome a good deal nearer. Now, however, we are too much to the right. Inside I pull my head and press the left-hand button. A red light glows in front of the pilot. I look down again. The small wood is in view, but even as I look the bomb-sight travels across it from the right well over to the left as the pilot swings the machine round in obedience to my signals.

Anxiously I press the button to the right again. Five or six times I press it quickly. Across the aerodrome the sight

swings toward the right. Just before it crosses the middle of it I press the middle button. A white light glows before the pilot—the "straight ahead" signal. I have not given it soon enough, however: the machine is not checked on its rightward swing in time. It stops the turn with the sight well to the right of the aerodrome. I look at the luminous range-bars of the sight. We are almost over the objective. If I do not alter the direction I shall not be over the aerodrome when the time has come to drop the bombs. I flash the red light a second. The machine flies on. I press my finger on it and hold it there. Round to the left it swings. I look carefully down the range-bars of the sight. They are almost in line.

I press the central again and again, trying to judge the moment when I can check the pilot, so that the swing of the machine will stop as we come over the aerodrome. I misjudge it. The bomb-sights are in line with the aerodrome, but we are swinging rapidly to the left. I press the bomb lever once quickly to release two bombs. If I released any more they would straggle in a line right off the objective. My hands are almost frozen, my eyes are running. I feel discouraged and unhappy. Down below I see two red flashes appear near the hangars, leaving two round moonlit clouds of smoke on the ground.

I climb up beside the pilot, but before I have time to speak he asks eagerly—

"Dropped them all, old boy? How did you do it?"

"Couldn't do it, Jimmy. I'm *awfully* sorry. It's this beastly signal light system. It isn't direct enough; I wish I could guide you better. It isn't your fault, but I can't stop you in time. I'll try again in a second if you swing her round."

In a great circle we sweep round to our old starting-point, and I get ready to make another attempt.

"I'll try very hard this time, old man. Let's get into the wind as near as we can, and you steer by some light, and I'll try to give as few changes in direction as I can. The worst is, I can't see the beastly aerodrome till we are almost on top of it, and then I can't get a decent 'run.' We must get that front cockpit position!"

I stand up and look over the front, and try to fix the exact position of the aerodrome and its surroundings in relation to the machine.

I hurry into the back and look through the trap-door again. I can hardly see, owing to my running eyes; but I wipe them dry, and look intently ahead in a horribly uncomfortable position, my head and shoulders hanging out of the bottom of the machine. Right ahead of us is the pale shape of the aerodrome. The pilot is flying magnificently. We are moving steadily forwards. As we draw nearer, I wriggle back

into the machine and look down the bomb-sight. The thin direction-bar lies right across the aerodrome. I joyously press the middle button, so that the white light laughs out: "Good! Good! Good!" into the pilot's face. We begin to drift slightly to the right. I do not touch the key-board, but stand up and push my body forwards beside the pilot and shout furiously—

"Turn her very very slightly to the left, Jimmy! We're doing fine! We'll get her this time! I'll press central when we're on it."

In a flash I am underneath the seat and looking at the bomb-sight. It swings slowly, slowly to the left. Just before it arrives over the aerodrome I press the white light button deliberately. The movement stops, and the bomb-sight begins to creep steadily forwards over the hangars and surface of the aerodrome. With my anxieties past I have a wonderful feeling of relaxation and happy excitement. Just before the two luminous range-bars actually touch the edge of the line of hangars, I grasp the bomb-handle and begin to press it forward slowly. I hear the sharp clatter of opening and closing of the bomb-doors behind me, and I see two plump bombs go tumbling downwards below the machine. Again, and a third and a fourth time, I press forward the bomb-handle, and can feel the little drags on it as I release bomb after bomb. I look behind, and see that they are all gone. I shine my torch through the racks to make sure, and I see the gun-layer busy with his torch also. I look below through the door, and see four or five bomb-flashes leap out across the aerodrome, while behind them lies apparently the smoke of others near the hangars. I slam the door to with a feeling of thankfulness, and get back to my seat.

"All gone, Jimmy! No 'hang-ups.' You did jolly well; they went right across the aerodrome. Let's push north-west back to the coast. I'm absolutely frozen."

I have a hurried look at my pressure-dials, to see that they are all right; and when I have adjusted them, I uncork my Thermos flask, have a comforting drink of hot tea, and eat some chocolate. I beat my gloved hands together and try to restore the circulation, and stamp my feet on the floor. Feeling tired and cold, I sit on my seat with my head on my breast, feeling languid and limp after the subconscious strain.

Towards the distant coast-line, with its steady flickers of lights at Ostend and Blankenberghe, we move, forgetting already the place on which we have just dropped our bombs. The turmoil of Bruges has subsided — only two wary searchlights stand sentinel at either side of the town, alert and scarcely moving. Those two are enough to give us warning, however, and we sweep to the left to leave the

simmering inferno well to our starboard.

Below lies the pallid moonlit country,—field and forest, chateau and canal,—clearly etched in a soft black pattern of shadows and dim light. Far, far to the south Ypres flashes and flares on the horizon, with its night-long artillery fire.

Now that our job is done, we are not so fearful of being over enemy country, partly because we are used to it by now, and partly because we are leaving the interior farther and farther behind us, minute by minute, as the coast-line draws nearer.

Unexpectedly I notice below the machine a curious white patch on the face of the country. Then I see others behind it, and realise that the coast-line is becoming swiftly blotted out under a layer of clouds.

"Jimmy! Look — clouds! We'll have to go carefully," I remark, and have a look at the compass. "Let's turn a bit more south-east, and we are bound to see Ostend."

We turn swiftly, and in a few minutes are above a white carpet of cloud, through which, to my joy, I can see very hazily the flashing light of Blankenberghe to my right. Over towards Zeebrugge rise a few parting strings of green balls as the last British machine turns out to sea.

For ten minutes we fly on by compass, which I check by the coldly glittering North Star, that shines faithfully for us high in the deep blue of the sky.

Then I see, running to and fro, and round and round, on the carpet of the clouds, little circles of light. Now and then one comes to a rift on the bank, and for a moment a beam of light shoots up into the sky, only to vanish again. The Ostend searchlights are vainly looking for us; our engines have been heard.

Now we are approaching a new formation of clouds, lovely towering masses of cumulus, pearl-white in the light of the moon. Over an unreal world of battlement and turret, of mountain summit and gloomy valley, we move in a splendid loneliness beneath the scattered stars. This billowy world of soft and silvery mountain ranges is made the more strange by the restless discs of radiance which run and swoop and circle and dance in a mad maze of movement across the curving pinnacles and ravines. Now and again a searchlight, striking into the heart of some towering summit of cloud, illuminates it with a glorious radiance, so that it seems for a moment to be woven of the fabric of light.

Suddenly the scene becomes even more fantastic, for in one place on the clouds appears a spot of vivid green. The spot of light spreads and spreads until it is a circle of emerald light, a mile or more in diameter, and from the extreme centre appears a ball of brilliantly green fire which pops out of it quickly, to be followed by another and another, until the whole chain of beads have freed themselves

from the entanglements of the vapour and rush gaily upwards high over our heads, to end their brief career in a lovely splendour above the milk-white billows of the cloudy sea.

Another point of cloud glows green, there is another swiftly expanding circle of colour, and another string of these quaint gems float upwards in a swaying curve. The sight is one of such exquisite loveliness that it is difficult to describe it. It is all so beautiful—the star-scattered vault of night, gold flowers in a robe of deepest blue: the soft white wonder of the rolling clouds, mile upon mile, as far as you can see, moonlit and magic, a playground for the gambolling figures of light which, like a host of Tinker Bells, rush deliriously from side to side, climb up hills and slide down valleys, and jump excitedly from peak to peak: the expanding flowers of emerald light from whose heart rise the bizarre bubbles of scintillating brilliance, to live through a few glorious seconds of ecstatic motion before they die in the immensity of the night.

It is a scene of a strange and ever-altering beauty, and one that very few eyes have seen. It is a world beyond the borders of the unreal. Forgotten is the material country of fields and forests far below—as forgotten as it is unseen. To a paradise of vague moon-kissed cloud we have drifted, and float, dreaming, between the stars of Heaven and the Purgatory beneath.

Then for a moment a great rift in the barrier appears beneath us. Across the dark space with its edges of ragged white lie two hard beams of light. Then we see, far below, a chain of green balls rush up from the darkness, and as they appear they light up a great circle of the earth, and slowly there appears nearly the whole of Ostend lit up by a ghostly greenish light. I see the shining sea, the line of the shore broken by the groins, and the huddled roofs of the houses. For a moment the scene is clear and distinct, then with the upward course of the balls of light it dies away, and the two searchlights throw blinding bands across a pool of obscurity.

What we have seen, however, is a sufficient guide. We know we are above the coast. The machine swings to the left, and above the rippling spots of light we roar on westwards. Soon we leave this fantastic dancing floor behind us, and, seeing through the misty curtains a watery glow of white light blossom out into a watery gleam and fade away, we know that we are somewhere near the lines.

Onwards we fly, watching the compass, watching the North Star, watching the pale veils of vapour beneath us. The cloud barrier grows thinner, and more and more rifts appear in it. About ten minutes after we have passed the lines, we see ahead of us a pale searchlight flash in the masses of cloud, now shooting up through a gap, now losing

itself in the lighted edges of a floating wisp. It flashes three times, and stops. Again it appears, three times stabbing the sky, challenging us with the "letter of the night" in Morse code.

I load my Very's light pistol and fire it over the side. A green light drifts down and dies. The searchlight goes out; we fly on.

"That light is somewhere near Furnes, Jimmy. Let's put our navigation lights on now; I'll try and pick up some landmark below,—the coast if I can . . . it's awfully thick to-night!"

Beneath in the murk I can see now and again a twinkling light, and then, to my delight, I pick up the shore. We fly on above it for a quarter of an hour. Then the pilot begins to get anxious.

"Can you see Dunkerque yet, old man? We ought to be there!" he asks.

I look below, and see sand-dunes and the unbroken coast running a little way on either side into the mist, which has now taken the place of the cloud.

"Can't quite make out, Jimmy. We had better fly on a bit. We must be past La Panne!"

For four or five minutes we fly on. Once I lose sight of the coast, and ask the pilot to turn to the right, not telling him the reason. To my relief I pick it up again before he suspects that I am lost.

"Anything in sight yet, Bowsh?" he asks. "We must be up near Dunkerque by now. We can't have passed it!"

Still the unbroken coast below.

"I'd better fire a light," I suggest.

"All right," he says. "Carry on—stop a minute, though! We *are* over the lines, aren't we?"

"We *must* be . . . I think. We passed Nieuport miles back. I can't make out where we are. I'll give a white!"

I load my Very's light pistol and fire it over the side. A ball of white fire drifts below towards the mocking emptiness of the mist. I stand up and look all around. Through the haze comes no welcome gleam.

"No answer, Jimmy! What *shall* we do? If we go on, we'll get miles down towards Calais! If we go back, we get over the lines. Go up and down here, and I'll try to find Dunkerque—it *must* be somewhere near!"

I fire another white light, and then another. No answer comes from the ground. No searchlights move across the sky. All we can see is a vague circle, bisected by the coast-line—one half being sea, the other half sand-dunes.

Then, in my excitement, I accidentally fire a Very's light inside the machine. The ball of blazing fire rushes frantically round our feet and up and down the floor. I hurriedly stamp it out amidst the curses of the pilot, who

says later that in my eagerness I picked it up and threw it over the side.

Now I press a brass key inside the machine which operates our big headlight. R-O-C-K-E-T-S, I flash piteously; and again, *Rockets*. Another Very's light I fire, and then click and clatter the key, "*Please fire rockets*"; and again, "*Rockets — we are lost!*"

"What shall we do?" asks the pilot in a hopeless voice. "Shall we land on the beach? I am getting fed up!"

"Just a second — I'll ask Wade."

I climb into the back and flash my torch through the bomb-racks. I see the face of the gunlayer in the ray of light. Pushing my head and shoulders into the maze of framework, I shout out at the top of my voice. The gunlayer shakes his head. I go forward and ask the pilot to throttle down a little.

The noise of the engine dies away. I hurry back and shout out again.

"Can you make out where we are, Wade? I'm quite lost. Have we got to Dunkerque?"

"Don't know, sir. I don't think so! I can't make out at all!"

I climb back into my seat, and say—

"Put the engines on again! It's no good! He doesn't know either! I don't know *what* to do!"

The key taps once more the vain appeal. Again and again I fire a white light. The floor round my feet is strewn with the empty cartridge cases of brown cardboard. I feel depressed and tired and irritable. What a silly end to a raid, it seems, to lose yourself right over your own aerodrome! It is undignified. I am ashamed to have had to ask the gunlayer where we are. I feel a pretty poor observer.

Then I see in the mist a little ahead of me a white light rise up and die away.

"Look, Jimmy! A white light! Good! They've seen us at last!"

But the pilot is not so trustful, and says—

"You're quite sure it isn't the *lines?*"

"Oh no! I'm sure! Throttle down a bit and glide that way!"

As we draw nearer I suddenly see the two piers of Dunkerque and the docks materialise in the mist, and on the other side the dull glow of landing flares from an aerodrome.

"No! It's *not* Ostend! It's all right, old man! There's St Pol! I'll fire another white!"

I fire for the last time, and scarcely has my ball of light died out before the answering signal soars up from the ground.

The engines are throttled, and we drift downwards on our whistling planes over the long basins of the Dunkerque docks. When we are about a hundred feet off the ground I press a small brass stud in front of me. A white glare of light bursts out under our right wing tip and throws a

quivering radiance on the dyke round the aerodrome, on the hangars, and on the landing field itself, at the end of which are two or three red lights. We sweep gently on the surface of the ground, and before we have stopped rolling forwards, a little figure runs towards us flashing a light, and we hear its voice call—

"Turn to the left soon. The ground is full of bomb-holes . . . where those red lights are!"

Guided by the figure on the ground we "taxi" up to the hangars and stop our engines. In a second I am on the ground.

"Didn't you see our Very lights?" I asked almost rudely. "Didn't you see us flashing signals? I signalled Rockets — rockets — rockets — till my hand ached! We got lost. We were going to land on the beach. Why didn't you help us?"

"We *wondered* what you were doing. We saw you firing lights on the other side of Dunkerque! But, I say, things have been humming here since you left!"

I can find no admiring audience for the experiences of the raid. Every one is eager to describe the German attack.

"By Jove! you were lucky to be away to-night!" says one. "They've been bombing us ever since you left. They must have dropped a couple of hundred during the night. No damage was done. The C.O. nearly got hit. He lay flat and one burst on either side of him. All the time you were bombing them they were bombing us!"

No one wants to hear our adventures. It is human nature all over again. They want to tell us what happened to them.

"Off Ostend we saw one of their patrols. It had a whacking big——"

"But you should have heard them whistling. Bob and I were talking outside the mess, when suddenly we heard——"

"We got over the clouds coming back. You ought to have seen the——"

"You've *missed* something, . . . and I reckon you're lucky! The noise was terrible!"

And so on, and so on goes the one-sided conversation of the two self-centred groups.

So ended a raid which is to my mind very unsatisfactory. I realise that we have to learn by experience, and I feel that to-night I have been taught a great deal. I am determined to have the bomb-sight and bomb-handle fitted in the front cockpit, so that with a splendid field of vision I can steer the pilot by the direct wave of my hand, by means of which I will be able to show emphasis or the reverse. The personal touch is essential. I will also be able to watch the enemy's defences and to counter them as much as possible.

In my next chapter I hope to show how this worked out in practice, and what it was like to attack a volcano such as Bruges.

(To be continued.)

THE RETURN PUSH.

BY QUEX.

XV.

SEPT. 19: That morning Bob Pottinger reported at Brigade Headquarters smiling all over his face. An extra leave warrant had come in, and it was his turn to go. For weeks past every one had known of his eagerness to get home, in order to conduct certain matrimonial projects to the "Yes or No" stage. Leave to England was going nicely now. Dumble, young Beale, Judd, and Hetherington were away, and the men were going at the rate of five per day. Officers had to be five months in France since their last leave —mostly it ran to seven; the men's qualification was twelve months. Happy is the army that is attacking! Only when the enemy has full possession of the initiative is leave entirely cut off.

Of the 5 P.M. attack carried out the night before by the —th Brigade, all that we knew was that unexpectedly large numbers of the enemy had been met. The fighting had been fierce, and the Boche still held some of the ground the Brigade had set out to take. Right through the night our guns had been busy firing protective bursts.

The mystery of the Boche's unlooked-for strength was explained by a Divisional wire that reached us about 8 A.M. It stated that a prisoner captured by the —th Brigade said that at 7 A.M. on the 18th, following urgent orders resulting from the British offensive at 5.20, a whole Boche Division came by bus from M——, fourteen miles back. Their mission was to make a counter-attack that would win back the original line. They deployed at B——, near the canal, and completed their march in readiness for an attack at 6 P.M. But the 5 P.M. thrust by our —th Brigade completely surprised them, and in fact broke up their offensive. The prisoner also reported that many casualties had been caused by our artillery fire.

The brigade-major, telephoning at 9 A.M., told us further details about the main offensive of the day before. The hold-up on our left had continued until late in the evening, in spite of renewed attacks on a big scale. "The German Alpine Corps have some of the stiffest fighters we have run against for a long time," he went on. "On the outskirts of E—— one post was held by three officers and forty-five men until 7.45 P.M. When they surrendered there were only seventeen not wounded."

The sunken road we were

occupying led towards the red-brick, modern-looking village of T——. A German encampment, quite a large one, containing several roomy huts newly built and well fitted up, stood outside the eastern edge of the village. The colonel had just pointed out that any amount of material for the improvement of our Headquarters was to be had for the fetching, and I had despatched the wheeler and a party of servants and signallers to the German encampment, when the telephone bell rang.

It was the brigade-major again. "We're doing another attack," he said cheerfully, "to finish the work started last evening. . . . I want you to open on line F 10 c 2.0 to F 16 b 0.[illegible]. . . . Dwell there till 11.20. . . . Then creep 1100 yards in a north-easterly direction—100 yards each four minutes—to F 11 a 4.0 to F 11 d 2.5. . . . Dwell twenty minutes. . . . Then creep 100 yards each four minutes to F 11 b 1.3 to F 11 d 8.7. . . . 4·5 hows. on S—— Farm. . . . Open at Rapid Rate on start-line for first four minutes. . . . Then go to Normal Rate for the creep, and Slow on final protective barrage. . . . Is that clear? . . . Right! . . . Good-bye."

I had repeated the map co-ordinates as the brigade-major gave them, and had written them down; and the colonel, coming in to the mess, followed the telephone conversation on his map. I handed him my note-book, and for five minutes he worked in his rapid silent way, with his ivory pocket-rule and scale for measuring map co-ordinates. Then he told the telephonist on duty to get him each battery in turn; and the brigade was soon a stage nearer in its preparations for supporting the Infantry Brigade selected to make the attack.

Ten minutes later the brigade-major again rang up to say that the how. battery was required to fire smoke-shells on certain points.

Before the fight began the colonel made a tour of the batteries. The party sent to the German camp returned with forms and tables, and plenty of corrugated iron and boards; and it was while I was detailing a party of them to dig a sleeping-place for the colonel farther into the bank that a group of officers, headed by a red-tabbed staff captain, came along. Even if I had not recognised him from his portraits—or because two winters before the war, he and I stayed in the same hotel at Nice—there was no doubt as to his identity. Name and title appeared written in indelible pencil on his box-respirator. He told me he was looking for a headquarters for his brigade, and he had heard that the sunken road was a likely spot. "I don't know how long we shall be here," I replied, "but we intend to carry out as many improvements as possible. It will be a decent place to take over when we leave." And I indicated the digging party. "Ernest," as usual, was extremely affable, and received

any amount of petting and patting from the visiting officers. Just as they departed the assistant brigade clerk came to me with a batch of men's leave warrants. I went into the mess, and was occupied signing the warrants and other documents for ten minutes or so. When I came out there was no sign of "Ernest." Ten minutes later the attack started and the air was fluttered with the swish and scream of shells.

An hour passed. The colonel returned. We lunched. Afterwards the colonel removed his jacket, did a bit of sawing, and directed the wheeler and his party in the task of boarding-in our gun-pit mess, so as to leave it no longer exposed to wind and rain on two sides. Hubbard, who was proud of his strength, climbed on top and pulled and shifted the three six-inch girders to more suitable positions. I took a turn with pick and shovel in the improvement of the colonel's dug-out. The dog had not come back. One of the orderlies thought he had seen him running along with the officers who had called before lunch.

About half-past three the brigade-major called for our 18-pounders to drive off another Boche wave with a half-hour's shower of shrapnel; he also wanted our how. battery to devote itself to S— Farm and H— Post, which forward observers reported to be little strongholds of enemy trench-mortars and machine-guns. Still no sign of "Ernest." The mess cart arrived at five o'clock, and as a last resource I scribbled a note to the doctor, who was as fond of the dog as any of us, describing the titled staff captain, and urging him to scour the countryside until he struck a trail that would lead to "Ernest's" recovery.

At 7.30 P.M. an S.O.S. call, telephoned by Drysdale, who was doing liaison with the —th Infantry Brigade, showed how desperately the Boche was contesting the occupation of the strong points on this portion of the front, although a Corps Intelligence Summary, delivered about the same time, told us that 60 officers and 2315 other ranks, wounded and unwounded, had passed through the Corps prisoners of war cages since 6 A.M. the day before, and that the strength of the average Hun infantry company had been reduced to 60 rifles.

As the colonel, Hubbard, and myself sat down to dinner the following message was handed to me:—

> Wire has been laid out to O.P. at F 16 c 4.2 by B and C Batteries. The contours on the small paper 1/20.000 map are not correct in this neighbourhood. New zero line was registered on T—— Farm.

"Yes, I've already warned the batteries that the special maps are not reliable," commented the colonel.

The end of the day found our infantry in possession of most of the strong points they had striven to seize, but at a heavy cost. And all through the

night our batteries poured forth fierce deadly fire to harass and nullify Hun efforts to loosen our grip.

It was the same sort of warfare next day. The fighting was carried out yard by yard. There was a certain post, D—— Post, very valuable to the Boche because it dominated the immediate neighbourhood. It was our batteries' business to make it hellishly uncomfortable for him. At 10 A.M. the colonel, after a talk with Division, ordered the brigade to bring harassing fire to bear during the next twenty-four hours upon D—— Post and the valley running north-east from it. The three 18-pdr. batteries were to work in two-hour shifts, firing 50 rounds an hour; the 4·5 how. battery was to fire 15 rounds per hour continuously. Next day the infantry were to storm the post, and thus secure a jumping-off spot for another forward leap.

With a more or less settled programme laid down—for twenty-four hours at any rate—the colonel, Hubbard, and I devoted some thought to the building of our Headquarters. "It looks as if we were in for a spell of trench-warfare without the protection we were accustomed to in trench-warfare days," observed the colonel. "There are no mined dug-outs to hide in." The cook, a Scottish miner, had contrived a kind of two-storied habitation in his little stretch of the bank, and he and Manning and my servant felt themselves moderately safe. The colonel's home—heavy "elephant" roof and wooden walls stuffed well into the bank—being complete, the wheeler, the servants, Hubbard, and myself put backs and forearms into the task of fashioning a similar shelter for Hubbard and me. I, of course, could not stray far from the telephone. The staff captain wanted to talk about new ammunition dumps and gun-repairing workshops. Major Bullivant inquired whether he couldn't be selected for the next gunnery course at Shoeburyness. Major Veasey thought it time another captain relieved Drysdale as liaison officer with the Infantry Brigade. And all the time there were routine papers and returns to be looked through and signed.

"There's something that will do for the September War Diary," said the colonel, putting in front of me a letter sent to him by the brigadier-general commanding one of our Infantry Brigades. It ran:—

> I am anxious that you and your officers and men should know how grateful I and my battalion commanders are to you for the excellent barrage you gave us yesterday morning (Sept. 18) under such very difficult circumstances. They all realise that with the moving of batteries, getting up the ammunition, and the frequent barrages you are called upon to provide, besides the harassing and the normal shooting, a very great strain is placed on your brigade. And the success we had yesterday was largely made pos-

sible by the splendid work of your people.

About eleven o'clock the doctor, who had ridden from the waggon line, came in gaily singing "Hail! hail! the gang's all here," to a tune from the "Pirates of Penzance." "I've located 'Ernest,'" he shouted triumphantly when he saw me.

"Splendid," I answered, smiling in return. "Have you got him at the waggon line?"

"No; I saw him as I was coming up here. He was trotting along with a captain who was going towards that village with the factory, over there."

"Was he a staff captain, with a Military Cross and another ribbon?" I asked. . . . "Didn't you tell him it was our dog?"

"That's so. I told him that, and 'Ernest' came and jumped around when he saw me; but the captain said it couldn't be our dog, because a brigadier-general's name was on the collar, and he wasn't going to let him go; his colonel wanted him. Besides," added the doctor plaintively, "'Ernest' wouldn't follow me."

"His colonel!" I repeated, puzzled. "Didn't he say 'his general'? A staff captain is on a Brigadier-General's staff. . . . His colonel? . . . Are you sure he was a staff captain? Was he wearing red?"

"I didn't see any red," replied the doctor. "He was walking behind a waggon that had a pile of wood and iron on it. It looked as if they were moving."

My face fell. "Did you notice his regiment? Was he a gunner or an infantryman, or what?" I asked quickly.

"Well, I can't say that I did. I don't know all your regiments."

The colonel joined us. "Laneridge has brought my mare up," he remarked pleasantly. "You'd like a little exercise, perhaps. When the doctor has finished his sick parade you take my mare, and see if the dog can be found."

The doctor and I rode across country, and scoured the village he had pointed to, but there was no trace of "Ernest." We spoke to a couple of military policemen, told them all about our loss, saw that they inscribed particulars in their note-books, and then continued our inquiries among some heavy gunners, who had pulled into a garden near the sugar factory. I even narrated the story to an Irish A.P.M., who was standing in the street conversing with a motoring staff officer. "I've been in this village fully an hour and haven't seen a dog such as you describe," said the A.P.M. "And I'm sure I should have noticed him. . . . I'm fond of dogs, and I notice them all. . . . I'll help you any way I can. . . . Give me full particulars, and I'll pass them round to my police."

He listened while I tried to obtain further clues from the doctor as to the branch of the service to which the captain, seen that morning with "Ernest," belonged. The doctor, his cap tilted backwards, a long dark cigar protruding

at an angle of 45 degrees from the corner of his mouth, did his best, but it was no good. "I'm sorry—I don't know your regiments well enough," he said at last.

It was at this point that the doctor's groom—in the building trade before the war—entered into the conversation. He had heard everything that had been said since the quest began, but this was the first remark he had made.

"The officer the medical officer spoke to this morning, sir, was in the —— Pioneers," he said to me.

"Why didn't you tell us that before?" asked the doctor impatiently.

"Sorry, sir, you didn't ask me," was the toneless reply.

The doctor looked unutterable things, and the lighted end of his cigar described three or four irregular circles. "Gosh!" he pronounced briskly. "We gotta put more pep into looking for this dog, or the war 'll end before we find him."

A high-velocity shell bursting on the near side of the factory helped to decide us. The A.P.M. said that a party of the Pioneers had marched down the street half an hour ago. The doctor and I bade him good-bye, went through the village, and were directed to a lane alongside a railway embankment. In one among a row of wooden huts, where the Headquarters of the reserve infantry brigade were quartered, we found the colonel of the Pioneers finishing lunch. He and our colonel were old friends, and immediately I explained the object of my visit he became sympathetic. "Yes," he laughed, "we have your dog—at least our A Company have him. I believe they found him wandering on the other side of the valley. . . . Stop and have some lunch, and I'll send for him."

"No, thank you, sir. . . . I shall have to be getting back."

A subaltern went off to fetch the dog. The doctor left to pick up the horses and to return to the waggon line. The colonel invited me to have a drink. But there was disappointment when the subaltern returned. "I'm afraid the dog has gone again, sir—about half an hour ago."

"Really!" said the colonel.

"Yes, sir; he was in A Company's mess when two Gunner officers passed, and he went after them."

"He knows your badge, at any rate," remarked the colonel to me with twinkling eyes. "I'm sorry you've had your journey for nothing. But we'll keep a look-out and send him back if he returns to us."

"I'm going to have another search round the village before I go back, sir," I responded determinedly. "We're getting warmer."

Turning from the lane into the road that led into the village, I noticed a groom who had been waiting with his two horses since the first time I passed the spot. At first he thought he hadn't seen a dog that looked like a cross between

an Airedale and a Belgian sheep-dog. Then he fancied he had. Yes, he believed it had passed that way with an R.A.M.C. major. "But those men near that ambulance car will tell you, sir. They were playing with the dog I saw, about half an hour ago."

Yes, I was really on the trail now. "That's right, sir," remarked the R.A.M.C. sergeant when he had helped two walking wounded into the ambulance car. "I remember the dog, and saw the name on the collar. . . . He followed our major about twenty minutes ago. He's gone across that valley to Brigade Headquarters. . . . I don't think he'll be long."

"What's it like up there?" asked one of the ambulance men of a slight, fagged-looking lance-corporal of the Fusiliers, who had been hit in the shoulder.

"Hot!" replied the Fusilier. "One dropped near Battalion Headquarters and killed our sergeant. . . . I think there are five more of our lot coming along."

There were two more places to be filled before the ambulance car moved off. Another Fusilier, wounded in the knee, hobbled up, assisted by two men of the same regiment, one of them with his head bandaged.

"Hullo, Jim!" called the lance-corporal from the ambulance. "I wondered if you'd come along too. Did you see Tom?"

"No," responded the man hit in the ankle.

The ambulance moved off. An empty one took its place. It was a quarter to two, but I was resolved to wait now until the R.A.M.C. major returned. Three shells came over and dropped near the railway. More walking wounded filled places in the ambulance.

The major, with "Ernest" at his heels, came back at a quarter-past two. "Ernest" certainly knew me again. He leapt up and licked my hand, and looked up while the major listened to my story. "Well, I should have kept him—or tried to do so," he said. "He's a taking little fellow, and I've always had a dog until a few weeks ago. . . . But"—with a pleasant smile—"I think you've earned your right to him. . . . I've never seen a dog so excited by shells. . . . Well, good-bye!"

He walked away, and "Ernest" started after him. I stood still in the centre of the road. The dog turned his head as if to see whether I meant to follow. Then he came back, and quietly lay down at my feet.

We had a joyous walk home. There were shells to scamper after, wire to scramble through, old trenches to explore. The return of "Ernest" brought a deep content to our mess.

. . . . . .

Sept. 21: The attack which started at 5.40 A.M. was carried out by two of our Divisional Infantry Brigades; a brigade of another Division attacked simultaneously. The object was to close with the main enemy positions in the Hinden-

burg Line. Tanks were put in to break down the opposition—sure to be met by the brigades on the left and right; and every officer in the Division knew that if the final objectives could be held the Boche would be compelled to withdraw large forces to the far side of the canal. The attack was planned with extraordinary attention to detail. Battalions were ordered not to attempt to push on beyond the final objective; trench mortars were to be moved up to cover the consolidation of the final positions; the reconnaissance work had been specially thorough. Our batteries had horses and limbers in readiness for a quick rushing up of the guns.

The earlier part of the operation went well enough, but by 8 A.M. we knew that our two Infantry Brigades were having to go all out. The Boche machine-gunners were firing with exemplary coolness and precision. At 8.30 the brigade-major telephoned that every gun we possessed must fire bursts on certain hostile battery positions. The colonel and I didn't leave the mess that morning; the telephone was rarely out of use. At half-past ten Major Bartlett, who had gone forward to an infantry post to see what was happening, got a message back to say that, harassed by heavy machine-gun and rifle fire our infantry were coming back. Aeroplane calls for artillery fire on hostile batteries were twice responded to by our batteries. Drysdale, doing liaison with the —rd Infantry Brigade, reported that two battalions had had severe losses. A buff slip from the Casualty Clearing Station informed us that the lead driver of our brigade telephone cart had died in hospital overnight: he had been hit just after leaving the Headquarters position the previous evening, and was the second Headquarters driver to be killed since Sept. 1. The only relief during a morning of excitement and some gloom was the arrival of three big cigars, sent by the doctor for the colonel, Hubbard, and myself. As the colonel didn't smoke cigars, the only solution was for Hubbard and myself to toss for the remaining one. Hubbard won.

At one o'clock it became clear that our infantry could not hope to do more than consolidate upon their first objective. There was no prospect of the batteries moving forward, and at 1.30 the colonel told me to send out this message to all batteries—

> Gun limbers and firing battery waggons need not be kept within 2000 yards of gun positions any longer to-day.

Major Veasey called on us at tea-time, and the talk ran on the possibilities of the next few days' fighting. "The Boche seems bent on holding out here as long as he can," said the major. "I think he's fighting a rearguard action on a very big scale," said the colonel thoughtfully. "Our air reports indicate much movement in his

back areas. . . . And most of his artillery fire is from long range now."

"Let's hope it continues in that way," went on the major, filling his pipe. "If only he'd stop his beastly gas shells it wouldn't be so bad. It's not clean war. I'd vote willingly for an armistice on gas shells."

"Are you improving your accommodation at the battery?" asked the colonel. "We're likely to be here a few days, and we must make as much protection as we can."

"We've got quite a decent dug-out in the bank to sleep in," answered Major Veasey, getting up to go, "but our mess is rather in the open—under a tarpaulin. However, it's quite a pleasant mess. Bullivant and Simpson came to dine last night, and we played bridge till eleven."

I had sent out the S.O.S. lines to batteries, and we had sat down to dinner a little earlier than usual, owing to the desirability of showing as little light as possible, when the telephone bell rang. I put the receiver to my ear.

A strong decided voice spoke. "Is that the adjutant, sir? . . . I'm Sergeant —— of D Battery, sir. . . . Major Veasey has been badly wounded."

"Major Veasey wounded," I repeated, and the colonel and Hubbard put down knives and forks and listened.

"Yes, sir . . . a gas shell came into the mess. Mr Kelly and Mr Wood have been wounded as well. . . . We've got them away to the hospital, sir. . . . Mr Kelly got it in the face, sir. . . . I'm afraid he's blinded."

"How was Major Veasey wounded?"

"In the arm and foot, sir. . . . Mr Wood was not so bad."

"There's no other officer at D Battery, sir," I said to the colonel, who was already turning up the list of officers in his note-book.

"Tell him that the senior sergeant will take command until an officer arrives," replied the colonel promptly, "and then get on to Drysdale at the infantry. I'll speak to him. . . . I don't like the idea of Veasey being wounded by a gas shell," he added quickly. Depression descended upon all three of us.

The colonel told Captain Drysdale to inform the Infantry Brigadier what had happened, and to obtain his immediate permission to go to the battery, about half a mile away. "You've got a subaltern at the waggon line. . . . Get him up," advised the colonel, "the sergeant-major can carry on there. . . . Tell the General that another officer will arrive as soon as possible to do liaison."

The colonel looked again at his note-book. "We're frightfully down in officers," he said at last. "I'll ask Colonel —— of the —rd if he can spare some one to take on to-night."

"I hope Veasey and Kelly are not badly wounded," he said later, lighting a cigarette. "And I'm glad it didn't come last night, when there were

three battery commanders at the bridge party. That would have been catastrophe."

That night the Boche rained gas shells all round our quarters in the sunken road. Hubbard and myself and "Ernest" were not allowed much sleep in our right little, tight little hut. One shell dropped within twenty yards of us; thrice fairly heavy shell splinters played an unnerving tattoo upon our thick iron roof; once we were forced to wear our box-respirators for half an hour.

At 11.30 P.M. the colonel telephoned from his hut to ours to tell me that new orders had come in from the brigade-major. "We are putting down a barrage from midnight till 12.15 A.M.," he said. "You needn't worry. I've sent out orders to the batteries. . . . Our infantry are making an assault at 12.15 on D—— Post. It ought to startle the Hun. He won't expect anything at that hour."

XVI.

Sept. 22: It was as the colonel expected. The Boche took our hurricane bombardment from midnight to 12.15 A.M. to be an unusually intense burst of night-firing; and when our guns "lifted" some six hundred yards, our infantry swept forward, and in a few minutes captured two posts over which many lives had been unavailingly expended during the two preceding days. Sixty prisoners also were added to their bag.

But the enemy was only surprised — not done with. This was ground that had been a leaping-off place for his mighty rush in March 1918. Close behind lay country that had not been trod by Allied troops since the 1914 invasion. He counter-attacked fiercely, and at 5.10 A.M. a signaller roused me with the message.

"Our attack succeeded in capturing D—— and D—— Posts, but failed on the rest of the front. S.O.S. line will be brought back to the line it was on after 12 midnight. Bursts of harassing fire will be put down on the S.O.S. lines and on approaches in rear from now onwards. About three bursts per hour. Heavy artillery is asked to conform."

I telephoned to the batteries to alter their S.O.S. lines, and told the colonel what had been done. Then I sought sleep again.

After breakfast the brigade-major telephoned that the Division immediately north of us was about to attempt the capture of a strong point that had become a wasps' nest of machine gunners. "We have to hold D—— Post and D—— Post at all costs," he added. All through the morning messages from Division artillery and from the liaison officer told the same tale: fierce sallies and desperate counter-attacks between small parties of the opposing infantry, who

in places held trench slits and rough earthworks within a mashie shot of each other. About noon the Germans loosed off a terrible burst of fire on a 500-yards front. "Every Boche gun for miles round seemed to be pulverising that awful bit," "Buller," who had gone forward to observe, told me afterwards. "My two telephonists hid behind a brick wall that received two direct hits, and I lay for a quarter of an hour in a shell-hole without daring to move. Then half a dozen of their aeroplanes came over in close formation and tried to find our infantry with their machine-guns. . . . I got the wind up properly." Our batteries answered three S.O.S. calls between 10 A.M. and 1 o'clock; and, simultaneously with a news message from Division stating that British cavalry had reached Nazareth and crossed the Jordan, that 18,000 prisoners and 160 guns had been captured, and that Liman von Sanders had escaped by the skin of his teeth, came a report from young Beale that Germans could be seen massing for a big effort.

I passed this information to the brigade-major, and our guns, and the heavies behind them, fired harder than ever. Then for an hour until 3 o'clock we got a respite. A couple of pioneers, lent to us by the colonel who had shown himself so sympathetic in the matter of the lost dog, worked stolidly with plane and saw and foot-rule improving our gun-pit mess by more expert carpentering than we could hope to possess. The colonel tore the wrapper of the latest copy of an automobile journal, posted to him weekly, and devoted himself to an article on spring-loaded starters. I read a typewritten document from the staff captain that related to the collection, "as opportunity offers," of two field guns captured from the enemy two days before.

But at 3.35 the situation became electric again. The clear high-pitched voice of young Beale sounded over the line that by a miracle had not yet been smashed by shell-fire. "Germans in large numbers are coming over the ridge south of T—— Farm," he said.

I got through to the brigade-major, and he instructed me to order our guns to search back 1000 yards from that portion of our front.

"Don't tell the batteries to 'search back,'" broke in the colonel, who had heard me telephoning. "It's a confusing expression. Tell them to 'search east,' or 'north-east' in this case."

By a quarter to four the telephone wires were buzzing feverishly. More S.O.S. rockets had gone up. The enemy had launched a very heavy counter-attack. Our overworked gunners left their tea, and tons of metal screamed through the air. Within an hour Drysdale sent us most inspiring news.

"The infantry are awfully pleased with our S.O.S. barrage," he said briskly. "As a matter of fact, that burst you

ordered at 3.40 was more useful still, . . . caught the Germans as they came out to attack. . . . They were stopped about 150 yards from our line. . . . They had to go back through our barrage. . . . It was a great sight. . . . The dead can be seen in heaps. . . . Over twenty Boche ran through our barrage and gave themselves up."

Drysdale had more good news for us twenty minutes later. Two companies of a battalion not attacked—they were to the right of the place to which the enemy advanced—saw what was happening, dashed forward along a winding communication-trench and seized a position that hitherto they had found impregnable. They got a hundred prisoners out of the affair.

Two more S.O.S. calls went up before dinner-time, but a day of tremendously heavy fighting ended with our men in glorious possession of some of the hardest-won ground in the history of the Division.

"If we can hold on where we are until really fresh troops relieve us we shall be over the Hindenburg Line in three days," said the colonel happily, as he selected targets for the night-firing programme.

He had written "From receipt of this message S.O.S. lines will be as follows—" when he stopped. "Can't we shorten this preliminary verbiage?" he asked quizzically. "Castle made this opening phrase a sort of tradition when he was adjutant."

"What about 'Henceforth S.O.S. lines will be'?" I replied, tilting my wooden stool backwards.

"That will do!" said the colonel.

And "henceforth" it became after that.

For two more days we carried on this most tiring of all kinds of fighting: for the infantry, hourly scraps with a watchful plucky foe; for the gunners, perpetual readiness to fire protective bursts should the enemy suddenly seek to shake our grip on this most fateful stretch of front, in addition to day and night programmes of "crashes" that allowed the gun detachments no rest, and at the same time demanded unceasing care in "laying" and loading and firing the guns. And with the opposing infantry so close to each other, and the front line changing backwards and forwards from hour to hour, absolute accuracy was never more necessary. The brigade had had no proper rest since the early days of August. The men had been given no opportunity for baths or change of clothing. Our casualties had not been heavy, but they were draining us steadily, and reinforcements stepped into this strenuous hectic fighting with no chance of the training and testing under actual war conditions that make a period of quiet warfare so valuable. And yet it was this portion of "the fifty days," this exhausting, remorseless, unyielding struggling that really led to the Boche's final downfall. It forced him to abandon the Hindenburg Line—the beginning of the very end.

I was going to write that it was astonishing how uncomplainingly, how placidly, each one of us went on with his ordinary routine duties during this time. But, after all, it wasn't astonishing. The moments were too occupied for weariness of soul; our minds rioted with the thought "He's getting done! Let's get on with it! Let's finish him." And if at times one reflected on the barrenness, the wastefulness of war, there still remained the satisfying of the instinct to do one's work well. The pioneers had done their very best, and made quite a house of our mess, even finding glass to put in the windows. I don't know that the old wheeler understood me when I emphasised this thoroughness of the pioneers by adding, "You see, we British always build for posterity," but before we went away he began to take a pride in keeping those windows clean.

On Sept. 25 we heard without much pleasure that we had come under another Divisional Artillery and were to retire to our waggon lines by nightfall. "I'd rather stay here a few days longer and then go out for a proper rest," said the colonel, taking appreciative stock of the habitations that had arisen since our occupation "I'm afraid this order means a shift to another part of the line." And it was so. Our brigade was to side-step north, and the colonel and the battery commanders went off after lunch to reconnoitre positions. An Australian Field Artillery Brigade came to "take-over" from us, and I yarned with their colonel and adjutant and intelligence officer while waiting for our colonel to return. I told them that it was ages since I had seen a 'Sydney Bulletin.'

"I used to get mine regularly," said their adjutant, "but it hasn't come for ten weeks now. I expect some skrimshanker at the post-office or at the base is pinching it. . . . I'm going to tell my people to wrap it up in the 'War Cry' before posting it. I know one chap who's had that done for over a year. No one thinks of pinching it then."

One of the Australian batteries was late getting in, and it was half-past seven before the colonel and I, waiting for the relief to be complete, got away. The Boche guns had been quiet all the afternoon. But—how often it happens when one has been delayed!—shells fell about the track we intended to take when we mounted our horses, and we had to side-track to be out of danger. When we arrived at Headquarters waggon lines it was too late to dine in daylight; and as Hun bombers were on the warpath our dinner was a blind-man's-buff affair.

The colonel had been told that we should be required to fight a battle at our new positions on the 27th, and already the batteries had commenced to take up ammunition. But when—the Hun aeroplanes having passed by and candle being permissible in our tents—the brigade clerk produced an order requiring us to have

two guns per battery in action that very night, I considered joylessly the prospect of a long move in the dark.

"They expect us to move up to-night, sir," I told the colonel, handing him the order brought by a motor-cyclist despatch-bearer about eight o'clock.

"Oh!" said the colonel, and the "Oh!" was a *chef-d'œuvre* of irony.

Then he wrote a masterly little note, perfect in its correctness, and yet instinct with the power and knowledge of a commander who had a mind of his own. He wrote as follows, and told me to hand the message to the returning despatch-rider:—

Ref. your B.M. 85 dated 25th Sept., I regret that I shall not be able to move one section per battery into action to-night.

I was late in returning from my reconnaissance owing to delay in fixing position for my Brigade Headquarters; did not get the order until eight o'clock, and by that time batteries had started moving ammunition up to the positions. All available guides had gone up with the ammunition waggons.

My batteries will be prepared to fire a barrage by dawn on 27th Sept.

In confirmation of my telephone conversation with B.M. to-day positions selected are as follows:—

The message closed with the map co-ordinates of the positions chosen for our four batteries, and with a request for the map location of the Divisional Artillery Headquarters, to which the note was sent.

Next day, the 26th, was a day of busy preparation. We learned that, for the first time, we should be in active co-operation with an American Division. The infantry of the British Division we were working under had been told off to protect the left flank of the American Division. The object of the attack was the capture of the last dominating strong-posts that guarded a section of the Hindenburg Line, immediately north of the section for which our own Divisional infantry had battled since Sept. 19. The enemy was to be surprised. Our guns, when placed in position, had to remain silent until they began the barrage on the 27th. That morning, therefore, topographical experts busied themselves ascertaining exact map locations of the batteries' positions so as to ensure accurate shooting by the map. The point was emphasised by the colonel, who wrote to all batteries:—

Battery Commanders are reminded that as barrages on morning of 27th will be fired without previous registration of guns,

THE LINE LAID OUT MUST NOT BE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON COMPASS BEARING. Check it by measuring angles to points which can be

identified on the map. All calculations to be made by two officers working separately, who will then check each other.

2. Every precaution must be taken not to attract the attention of the enemy to batteries moving forward into action. Nothing to be taken up in daylight, except in the event of *very* bad visibility.

The colonel rode over to see the C.R.A. of the Division to whom our brigade had been loaned. After lunch he held a battery commanders' conference in his tent, and explained the morrow's barrage scheme. "Ernest," the dog, spent a delighted, frolicsome hour, chasing a Rugby football that some Australians near our waggon lines brought out for practice. Hubbard went on to the new positions to lay out his telephone lines. I occupied myself completing returns for the staff captain.

By five o'clock I had joined the colonel and Hubbard at the new positions. Our only possible mess was a roofless gun-pit not far from a road. The colonel and Hubbard were covering it with scrap-heap sheets of rusty iron, and a tarpaulin that was not sufficiently expansive. Further down the road was a dug-out into which two could squeeze. The colonel said Hubbard and I had better occupy it. He preferred to sleep in the gun-pit, and already had gathered up a few armfuls of grasses and heather to lie upon. Manning and the cook had discovered a hole of their own, and the two clerks and the orderlies had cramped themselves into a tiny bivouac.

The final fastening-down of the gun-pit roof was enlivened by heavy enemy shelling of a battery four hundred yards north-east of us. Several splinters whistled past, and one flying piece of iron, four inches long and an inch wide, missed my head by about a foot and buried itself in the earthen floor of the mess. "That's the narrowest escape you've had for some time," smiled the colonel.

Ten minutes later the brigade clerk brought me the evening's batch of Divisional messages and routine orders. This was the first one I glanced at:—

> Wire by return name of war-tired captain or subaltern, if any, available for temporary duty for administration and training of R.A. malaria convalescents. Very urgent.

XVII.

Sept. 27: Our meetings with the Americans had so far been pretty casual. We had seen parties of them in June and July, training in the Contay area, north of the Albert-Amiens road; and one day during that period I accom-

panied our colonel and the colonel of our companion brigade on a motor trip to the coast, and we passed some thousands of them hard at work getting fit, and training with almost fervid enthusiasm. It used to be a joke of mine that on one occasion my horse shied because an Australian private saluted me. No one could make a friendly jest of like kind against the American soldiers. When first they arrived in France no troops were more punctilious in practising the outward and visible evidences of discipline. Fit, with the perfect fitness of the man from 23 to 28, not a weed amongst them; intelligent-looking, splendidly eager to learn, they were much akin in physique and general qualities to our own immortal "First Hundred Thousand." I came across colonels and majors of the New York and Illinois Divisions getting experience in the line with our brigadiers and colonels. I have seen U.S. Army N.C.O.'s out in the fields receiving instruction from picked N.C.O.'s of our army in the art of shouting orders. Their officers and men undertook this training with a certain shy solemnity that I myself thought very attractive. I am doing no lip-service to a "wish is father to the thought" sentiment when I say that a manly modesty in respect to military achievements characterised all the fighting American soldiers that I met.

They were not long in tumbling into the humours of life at the front. I remember an episode told with much enjoyment by a major of the regular U.S. army, who spent a liaison fortnight with our Division.

There is a word that appears at least once a day on orders sent out from the "Q" or administrative branch of the British Army. It is the word "Return": "Return of Personnel," "Casualty Returns," "Ammunition Returns," &c., all to do with the compilation of reports. The American Division to which the major belonged had been included among the units of a British Corps. When, in course of time, the Division was transferred elsewhere corps Q branch wired, "Return wanted of all tents and trench shelters in your possession." Next day the American Division received a second message: "Re my 0546/8023, hasten return of tents and trench shelters."

The day following the corps people were startled by the steady arrival of scores of tents and trench shelters. The wires hummed furiously, and the corps staff captain shouted his hardest explaining over a long-distance telephone that "Hasten return" did not mean "Send back as quickly as possible."

"And we thought we had got a proper move on sending back those tents," concluded the American major who told me the story.

And now we were in action with these virile ardent fellows. Two of their Divisions took part in the great battle which at 5 30 A.M. opened on a 35-mile front—ten days of bloody, vic-

torious fighting by which three armies shattered the last and strongest of the enemy's fully-prepared positions, and struck a vital blow at his main communications.

The first news on Sept. 27th was of the best. On our part of the front the Americans had swept forward, seized the two ruined farms that were their earliest objectives, and surged to the top of a knoll that had formed a superb point of vantage for the Boche observers. By 7.30 A.M. the brigade was told to warn F.O.O.'s that our bombers would throw red flares outside the trenches along which they were advancing to indicate their position.

But again there was to be no walk-over. The Boche counter-attack was delivered on the Americans' left flank. We were ordered to fire a two-hours' bombardment upon certain points toward which the enemy was pouring his troops; and the colonel told me to instruct our two F.O.O.'s to keep a particular look-out for hostile movement.

By 11 A.M. Division issued instructions for all gun dumps to be made up that night to 500 rounds per gun. "Stiff fighting ahead," commented the colonel.

At three o'clock Dumble, who was commanding B Battery, Major Bullivant having gone on leave, reported that the Americans were withdrawing from the knoll to trenches four hundred yards in rear, where they were reorganising their position.

That settled the fighting for the day, although there was speedy indication of the Boche's continued liveliness: a plane came over, and by a daring manœuvre set fire to three of our "sausage" balloons, the observers having to tumble out with their parachutes. All this time I had remained glued to the telephone for the receipt of news and the passing of orders. There was opportunity now to give thought to the fortifying of our Headquarters. Hubbard, who prided himself on his biceps, had engaged in a brisk discussion with the officers of a near-by Artillery Brigade Headquarters regarding the dug-out that he and myself and "Ernest" had occupied the night before. Originally it had been arranged that we should share quarters with them, dug-outs in a neighbouring bank having been allotted for their overflow of signallers. But at the last moment an Infantry Brigade Headquarters had "commandeered" part of their accommodation, and they gave up the dug-out that Hubbard and I had slept in, with the intimation that they would want it on the morrow. As Hubbard had discovered that they were in possession of four good dug-outs on the opposite side of the road, he said we ought to be allowed to retain our solitary one. But no! they stuck to their rights, and during the morning's battle a stream of protesting officers came to interview Hubbard. Their orderly officer was suave but anxious; their signalling

officer admitted the previous arrangement to share quarters; Hubbard remained firm, and said that if the Infantry Brigade had upset their arrangements, they themselves had upset ours. I was too busy to enter at length into the argument, but I agreed to send a waggon and horses to fetch material if they chose to build a new place. When their adjutant came over and began to use sarcasm, I referred the matter to our colonel, who decided "Their Division has sent us here. The dug-out is in our area. There is no other accommodation. We shall keep it."

"Will you come over and see our colonel, sir?" asked the adjutant persuasively.

"Certainly not," replied the colonel with some asperity.

The next arrivals were a gas officer and a tall ebullient Irish doctor, who said that the dug-out had been prepared for them. Hubbard conveyed our colonel's decision, and ten minutes later his servant brought news that the doctor's servant had been into the dug-out and replaced our kit by the doctor's.

Hubbard, smiling happily, slipped out of our gun-pit mess, and the next item of news from this bit of front informed me that our valises had been replaced and the doctor's kit put outside. Hubbard told me he had informed the doctor and the gas officer that, our colonel having made his decision, he was prepared to repeat the performance every time they invaded the dug-out. "And I was ready to throw them after their kit if necessary," he added, expanding his chest.

The upshot of it all was that our horses fetched fresh material, and we helped to find the doctor and the gas officer a home.

The battle continued next day, our infantry nibbling their way into the Boche defences and allowing him no rest. The artillery work was not so strenuous as on the previous day, and Hubbard and I decided to dig a dug-out for the colonel. It was bonny exercise for me. "I think every adjutant ought to have a pit to dig in—adjutants get too little exercise," I told the colonel. After which Hubbard, crouching with his pick, offered practical tuition in the science of underpinning. We sweated hard and enjoyed our lunch. Judd and young Beale reported back from leave, and Beale caused a sensation by confessing that he had got married. A Corps wire informed every unit that Lance-Corporal Kleinberg-Hermann, "5 ft. 8, fair hair, eyes blue, scar above nose, one false tooth in front, dressed German uniform," and Meyer Hans, "6 ft., fair hair, brown eyes, thin face, wears glasses, speaks English and French fluently, dressed German uniform," had escaped from a prisoners of war camp. The mail brought a letter from which the colonel learnt that a long-time friend, a lieut.-colonel in the Garrison Artillery, had been killed. He had lunched with us one day

in June, a bright-eyed grizzled veteran, with a whimsical humour. India had made him look older than his years. "They found his body in No Man's Land," said the colonel softly. "They couldn't get to it for two days."

At half-past nine that night we learned that our own Divisional Infantry were coming up in front of us again. There was to be another big attack, and to complete the work begun by the Americans, at zero hour we should pass under the command of our Divisional Artillery. At four in the morning the telephone near my pillow woke me up, and Major Bartlett reported that the Boche had started a barrage. "I don't think he suspects anything," said the major; "it's only ordinary counter-preparation." In any case it didn't affect our attack, which started with splendid zest. The Boche plunked a few gas shells near us; but by 9.15 the brigade-major told me that the Americans and our own infantry had advanced a thousand yards and were on their first objective. "I smell victory to-day," said the colonel, looking at his map. By half-past ten Major Bartlett's battery had moved forward two thousand yards, and the major had joined a battalion commander so as to keep pace with the onward rush of the infantry.

Good news tumbled in. At 10.50 the Intelligence Officer of our companion Artillery brigade rang up to tell me that their liaison officer had seen our troops entering the southern end of a well-known village that lay along the canal.

"Ring up A and B at once," interjected the colonel, "and tell them to stop their bursts of fire, otherwise they will be firing on our own people. Tell our liaison officer with the —th Infantry Brigade that we are no longer firing on the village. . . . And increase the how. battery's range by 1000 yards."

Five minutes later the brigade-major let us know that the Corps on our left had cleared a vastly important ridge, but their most northerly Division was held up by machine-gun fire. When the situation was eased they would advance upon the canal. Our D Battery was now firing at maximum range, and at 11.20 the colonel ordered them to move up alongside C.

The exhilarating swiftness of the success infected every one. Drysdale rang up to know whether we hadn't any fresh targets for D Battery. "I'm sure we've cleared out every Boche in the quarry you gave us," he said. The staff captain told us he was bringing forward his ammunition dumps. The old wheeler was observed to smile. Even the telephone seemed to be working better than for months past. In restraint of over-eagerness complaints of short shooting filtered in from the infantry, but I established the fact that our batteries were not the sinners.

By tea-time all the batteries

had advanced, and the colonel, "Ernest," and myself, were walking at the head of the Headquarters waggons and mess carts through a village that a fortnight before had been a hotbed of Germany's hardest fighting infantry.

The longer the time spent in the fighting area, the stronger that secret spasm of apprehension when a shift forward to new positions had to be made. The ordinary honest-souled member of His Majesty's forces will admit that to be a true saying. The average healthy-minded recruit coming to the Western Front since July 1916 marvelled for his first six months on the thousands of hostile shells that he saw hitting nothing in particular, and maiming and killing nobody. If he survived a couple of years he lost all curiosity about shells that did no harm; he had learned that in the forward areas there was never real safety, the fatal shell might come at the most unexpected moment, in the most unlooked-for spot—it might be one solitary missile of death, it might accompany a hideous drove that beat down the earth all around and drenched a whole area with sickening, scorching fumes; he might not show it, but he had learned to fear.

But on this move-up we were agog with the day's fine news. We were in the mood to calculate on the extent of the enemy's retirement: for the moment his long-range guns had ceased to fire. We talked seriously of the war ending by Christmas. We laughed when I opened the first Divisional message delivered at our new Headquarters: "Divisional Cinema will open at Lieramont to-morrow. Performances twice daily, 3 P.M. and 6 P.M." "That looks as if our infantry are moving out," I said.

We had taken over a bank and some shallow aged dug-outs, occupied the night before by our C Battery; and as there was a chill in the air that foretold rain, and banks of sombre clouds were lining up in the western sky, we unloaded our carts and set to work getting our belongings under cover while it was still light. "There's no pit for you to dig in," the colonel told me quizzingly, "but you can occupy yourself filling these ammunition boxes with earth; they'll make walls for the mess." Hubbard had been looking for something heavy to carry; he brought an enormous beam from the broad-gauge railway that lay a hundred yards west of us. The colonel immediately claimed it for the mess roof. "We'll fix it centre-wise on the ammunition boxes to support the tarpaulin," he decided. "Old Fritz has done his dirtiest along the railway," said Hubbard cheerfully. "He's taken a bit out of every rail; and he's blown a mine a quarter of a mile down there that's giving the sappers something to think about. They told me they want to have trains running in two days."

Meanwhile the signallers had been cleaning out the deep shaft they were to work in; the cooks and the clerks had

selected their own rabbit-hutches; and I had picked a semi-detached dug-out in which were wire beds for the colonel, Hubbard, and myself. True, a shell had made a hole in one corner of the iron roof, and the place was of such antiquity that rats could be heard squeaking in the vicinity of my bed-head, but I hoped that a map-board fixed behind my pillow would protect me from unpleasantness.

The colonel was suspicious of the S.O.S. line issued to us by Division that night. The ordinary rules of gunnery provide that the angle of sight to be put on the guns can be calculated from the difference between the height of the ground on which the battery stands and the height at the target. More often than not ridges intervene between the gun and the target, and the height and position of these ridges sometimes cause complications in the reckoning of the angle of sight, particularly if a high ridge is situated close to the object to be shot at. Without going into full explanation, I hope I may be understood when I say that the correct angle of sight, calculated from the map difference in height between battery and target, occasionally fails to ensure that the curve described by the shell in its flight will finish sufficiently high in the air for the shell to clear the final crest. When that happens shells fall on the wrong side of the ridge, and our own infantry are endangered. It is a point to which brigade-majors and brigade commanders naturally give close attention.

The colonel looked at his map, shook his head, said, "I don't like that ridge," and got out his ruler and made calculations. Then he talked over the telephone to the brigade-major. "Yes, I know that theoretically, by every ordinary test, we should be safe in shooting there, and I know what you want to shoot at. . . . But there's a risk, and I should prefer to be on the safe side. . . . Will you speak to the General about it?"

The colonel gained his point, and at 10.20 P.M. issued a further order to the batteries:—

> Previous S.O.S. line is cancelled, as it is found that the hillside is so steep that our troops in T—— Support Trench may be hit.
>
> Complaints of short shooting have been frequent all day. Henceforth S.O.S. will be as follows. . . .

"I'll write out those recommendations for honours and awards before turning in," he said, a quarter of an hour later, searching through the box in which confidential papers were kept. "Now, what was it I wanted to know?—oh, I remember. Ring up Drysdale, and ask him whether the corporal he put in is named Marchman or Marshman. His writing is not very clear. . . . If he's gone to bed, say I'm sorry to disturb him, but these things want to be got in as soon as possible."

It was a quiet night as far

as shell-fire was concerned, but a furious rain-storm permitted us very little sleep, and played havoc with the mess. Our documents remained safe, though most of them were saturated with water. In the morning it was cold enough to make one rub one's hands and stamp the feet. There was plenty of exercise awaiting us in the enlarging and rebuilding of the mess. We made it a very secure affair this time. "What about a fire, sir?" inquired Hubbard. . . .

"Good idea," said the colonel. He and Hubbard used pick and shovel to fashion a vertical, triangular niche in the side of the bank. The staff-sergeant fitter returned with a ten-foot stove-pipe that he had found in the neighbouring village; and before ten o'clock our first mess fire since the end of April was crackling merrily, and burning up spare ammunition boxes.

The colonel went off to tour the batteries, saying, "I'll leave you to fight the battle." The brigade-major's first telephone talk at 10.35 A.M. left no doubt that we were pushing home all the advantages gained the day before. "I want one good burst on —— Trench," he said. "After that cease firing this side of the canal until I tell you to go on." The news an hour later was that our Divisional Infantry patrols were working methodically through the village on the canal bank, which the Americans had entered the day before. Next "Buller," who was with the Infantry Brigade, called up, and said that the mopping-up in the village had been most successful: our fellows were thrusting for the canal bridge, and had yet to encounter any large enemy forces. At twenty to one the brigade-major told me that our people were moving steadily to the other side of the canal—"We're properly over the Hindenburg Line this time," he wound up.

The Brigadier-General C.R.A. came to see us during the afternoon, and we learned for the first time that on the previous day the Americans had fought their way right through the village, but, on account of their impetuosity, had lost touch with their supports. "They fought magnificently, but didn't mop-up as they went along," explained the General. "The Boche tried the trick he used to play on us. He hid until the first wave had gone by, and then came up with his machine-guns and fired into their backs. . . . It's a great pity. . . . I'm afraid that six hundred of them who crossed the canal have been wiped out."

"I hear that our infantry go out for a proper rest as soon as this is over," he added. "They brought them up again to complete the smashing of the Hindenburg Line, because they didn't want to draw upon the three absolutely fresh Divisions they were keeping to chase the Hun immediately he yielded the Hindenburg Line. Our infantry must have fought themselves to a standstill these last three weeks."

"Any news about us?" inquired the colonel.

"No, I'm afraid the gunners will have to carry on as usual. . . . The horses seem to be surviving the ordeal very well."

At 4.25 P.M.—I particularly remember noting the time—we were told by Division that Bulgaria's surrender was unconditional. "That will be cheering news for the batteries," observed the colonel. "I'd send that out." The brigade-major also informed us that British cavalry were reported to be at Roulers, north-east of Ypres—but that wasn't official. "Anyhow," said the colonel, his face glowing, "it shows the right spirit. Yes, I think the war will be over by Christmas after all."

"It would be great to be home by Christmas, sir," put in Hubbard.

"Yes," responded the colonel in the same vein, "but it wouldn't be so bad even out here. . . . I don't think any of us would really mind staying another six months if we had no 5·9's to worry us." And he settled down to writing his daily letter home.

October came in with every one joyously expectant. The enemy still struggled to hold the most valuable high ground on the far side of the canal, but there was little doubt that he purposed a monster withdrawal—and our batteries did their best to quicken his decision. The brigade-major departed for a Senior Staff Course in England, and Major "Pat" of our sister brigade, a highly efficient and extremely popular officer, who, with no previous knowledge of soldiering, had won deserved distinction, filled his place. Major "Pat" was a disciple of cheering news for the batteries. "This has just come in by the wireless," he telephoned to me on October 2nd. "Turkey surrendered—British ship sailing through the Dardanelles—Lille being evacuated—British bluejackets landed at Ostend."

"Is that official?" I asked wonderingly.

He laughed. "No, I didn't say that. . . . It's a wireless report."

"Not waggon line?" I went on.

He laughed again. "No, I'll let you know when it becomes official."

Formal intimation was to hand that Dumble, Judd, Bob Pottinger, Young Beale, Stenson, and Tinoler had been awarded the Military Cross, and Major Veasey the D.S.O. Drysdale was happy because, after many times of asking, he had got back from Headquarters, Patrick, the black charger that he had ridden early in 1916.

The tide of success rolled on. A swift little attack on the morning of October 3rd took the infantry we were supporting, now that our own battalions had withdrawn for a fortnight's rest, on to valuable high ground east of the canal. "They met with such little opposition that our barrage became merely an escort," was the way in which Beadle, who was doing F.O.O., described

the advance. Surrendering Germans poured back in such numbers that dozens of them walked unattended to the prisoners of war cages. "I saw one lot come down," a D.A.C. officer told me. "All that the sentry had to do was to point to the cage with a 'This-way-in' gesture, and in they marched."

One wee cloud blurred the high-spirited light-heartedness of those days. We lost "Ernest," who had marched forward with us and been our pet since Sept. 6th. The colonel and Hubbard took him up the line; the little fellow didn't seem anxious to leave me that morning, but I thought that a run would do him good, and he had followed the colonel a couple of days before. "I'm sorry, but we've lost 'Ernest,'" was the colonel's bluntly-told news when he returned. "He disappeared when I was calling on B Battery. . . . They said he went over the hill with an infantry officer, who had made much of him. . . . It's curious, because he stuck to us when I went to see the infantry at Brigade Headquarters, although every one in their very long dug-out fussed over him."

There was poor chance of the dog finding his way back to us in that country of many tracks, amid the coming to and fro of thousands of all kinds of troops. We never saw or heard of him again. The loss of him dispirited all of us a bit, and I suppose I felt it more than most: he had been a splendid little companion for nearly a month.

The adjutant and Wilde returned from leave on Oct. 3rd, full of the bright times to be spent in London. "People in England think the war's all over. They don't realise that pursuing the Boche means fighting him as well," burst forth the adjutant. "By Gad," he went on, "we had a narrow escape the day we went on leave. I never saw anything like it in my life. You remember the factory at Moislains, near the place where we were out for three or four days at the beginning of last month. Well, Wilde and I caught a leave bus that went that way on the road to Amiens. The bus had to pull up about five hundred yards short of the factory, because there was a lot of infantry in front of us. . . . And just at that moment a Boche mine blew up. . . . Made an awful mess. . . . About eleven men killed. . . . We had taken the place three weeks before, and the mine had remained undiscovered all that time. . . . We must all of us have passed over that spot many times. You remember they made a Red Cross Station of the factory. . . . A most extraordinary thing!"

The Boche fire had died away almost entirely; it was manifest that the brigade would have to move forward. I could go on leave now that the adjutant was back—Beadle and myself were the only two officers in the brigade who had gone through the March retreat and not yet been on leave to England;

but I was keen on another trip forward with the colonel, and on the morning of the 4th Wilde and I joined him on a prospecting ride, looking for new positions for the batteries.

It was a journey that quickened all one's powers of observation. We went forward a full five miles, over yellow churned wastes that four days before had been crowded battlefields; past shell-pocked stretches that had been made so by our own guns. At first we trotted along a straight road that a short time before had been seamed with Boche trenches and barbed wire. The colonel's mare was fresh and ready to shy at heaps of stones and puddles. "She's got plenty of spirit still," said the colonel, "but she's not the mare she was before the hit in the neck at Commenchon. However, I know her limitations, and she's all right providing I spare her going uphill."

Just outside the half-mile long village of R—— he pointed to a clump of broken bricks and shattered beams. "That's the farm that D Battery insisted was G—— Farm, when we were at C—— Post on September 19," he explained. "The day I was with him at the 'O.P.,' Wood couldn't understand why he was unable to see his shells fall. He telephoned to the battery to check the range they were firing at, and then decided that the map was wrong. When I told him to examine his map more closely he spotted the 140 contour between this place and G—— Farm. It made G—— Farm invisible from the 'O.P.' Of course G—— Farm is 2000 yards beyond this place."

We reached a battered crossroads 1200 yards due south of D—— Post, that cockpit of the bitter hand-to-hand fighting of Sept. 19th and 20th. A couple of captured Boche 4·2's—the dreaded high-velocity gun—stood tucked behind a low grassless bank, their curved, muddy, camouflaged shields blending with the brown desolation of the landscape. Two American soldiers saluted the colonel gravely—lean, tanned, straight-eyed young fellows. For the first time I noticed that the Americans were wearing puttees like our men, instead of the canvas gaiters which they sported when first in France. Their tin hats and box-respirators have always been the same make as ours.

The colonel stopped to look at his map. "We'll turn north-east here and cross the canal at B——," he said. We rode round newly-dug shell-slits, and through gaps in the tangled, rusted barbed wire; at one spot we passed eighteen American dead, laid out in two neat rows, ready for removal to the cemetery that the U.S. Army established in the neighbourhood; we went within twenty yards of a disabled tank that a land mine had rendered *hors de combat;* we came across another tank lumbered half-way across a road. "Tanks always seem to

take it into their heads to collapse on a main road and interrupt traffic," muttered the colonel sardonically.

There were twelve hundred yards of a straight sunken road for us to ride through before we reached B——. That road was a veritable gallery of German dead. They lay in twos and threes, in queer horrible postures, along its whole unkempt length, some of them with blackened decomposing faces and hands, most of them newly killed, for this was a road that connected the outer defences of the Hindenburg Line with the network of wire and trenches that formed the Hindenburg Line itself. "Best sight I've seen since the war," said Wilde with satisfaction. And if the colonel and myself made no remark we showed no disagreement. Pity for dead Boche finds no place in the average decent-minded man's composition. Half a dozen of our armoured cars, wheels off, half-burned, or their steering apparatus smashed, lay on the entrenched and wired outskirts of B——, part of the Hindenburg Line proper. In the village itself we found Red Cross cars filling up with wounded; Boche prisoners were being used as stretcher-bearers; groups of waiting infantry stood in the main street; runners flitted to and fro.

"We'll leave our horses here," said the colonel; and the grooms guided them to the shelter of a high solid wall. The colonel, Wilde, and I ascended the main street, making eastward. A couple of 5·9's dropped close to the northern edge of the village as we came out of it. We met a party of prisoners headed by two officers, one short, fat, nervous, dark, bespectacled; the other bearded, lanky, nonchalant, and of good carriage. He carried a gold-nobbed Malacca cane. Neither officer looked at us as we passed. The tall one reminded me of an officer among the first party of Boche prisoners I saw in France, in August 1916. His arrogant disdainful air had roused in me a gust of anger that made me glad I was in the war.

We went through a garden transformed into a dust-bin, and dipped down a hummocky slope that rose again to a chalky ridge. Shells were screaming overhead in quick succession now, and we walked fast, making for a white boulder that looked as if it would offer shielded observation and protection. We found ourselves near the top of one of the giant air-shafts that connected with the canal tunnel. Tufts of smoke spouted up at regular intervals on the steep slope behind the village below us. "We're in time to see a barrage," remarked the colonel, pulling out his binoculars. "Our people are trying to secure the heights. I didn't know that G—— was quite clear of Boche. There was fighting there yesterday."

"There are some Boche in a trench near that farm on the left," he added a minute

later, after sweeping the hills opposite with his glasses. "Can you see them?"

I made out what did appear to be three grey tin-helmeted figures, but I could see nothing of our infantry. The shelling went on, but time pressed, and the colonel, packing up his glasses, led us eastwards again, down to a light railway junction, and through a quaint little ravine lined with willow-trees. Many German dead lay here. One young soldier, who had died with his head thrown back resting against a green bank, his blue eyes open to the sky, wore a strangely perfect expression of peace and rest. Up another ascending sunken road. The Boche guns seemed to have switched, and half a dozen shells skimmed the top of the road, causing us to wait. We looked again at the fight being waged on the slopes behind the village. Our barrage had lifted, but we saw no sign of advancing infantry.

The colonel turned to me suddenly and said, "I'm going to select positions about a thousand yards south of where we are at this moment—along the valley. Wilde will come with me. You go back and pick up the horses, and meet us at Q—— Farm. I expect we shall be there almost as soon as you."

I followed the direct road to return to B——. A few shells dropped on either side of the road, which was obviously a hunting-ground for the Boche gunners. At least a dozen British dead lay at intervals huddled against the sides of the road. One of them looked to be an artillery officer, judged by his field-boots and spurs. But the top part of him was covered by a rainproof coat, and I saw no cap.

Q—— Farm was a farm only in name. There was no wall more than three feet high left standing; the whole place was shapeless, stark, blasted into nothingness. In the very centre of the mournful chaos lay three disembowelled horses and an overturned Boche ammunition waggon. The shells were still on the shelves. They were Yellow Cross, the deadliest of the Boche mustard-gas shells.

I went on leave next morning, and got a motor-car lift from Peronne as far as Amiens. Before reaching Villers-Bretonneux, of glorious fearful memories, we passed through Warfusee-Abancourt, a shell of its former self, a brick heap, a monument of devastation. An aged man and a slim white-faced girl were standing by the farm cart that had brought them there, the first civilians I had seen since August. The place was deserted save for them. In sad bereavement they looked at the cruel desolation around them.

"My God," said my companion, interpreting my inmost thought, "what a home-coming!"

(To be concluded.)

GEORGE MEREDITH AND OTHERS.

It is not easy to understand the meaning and purpose of Mr S. M. Ellis's book about George Meredith.[1] Mr Ellis seems to have no other qualification for the work which he undertakes but consanguinity. He is George Meredith's second cousin, and if that relationship should be a proper cause of biography, then another terror is added to death. Moreover, George Meredith demands in critic or biographer something more than the accident of common blood. He is not the easiest writer in the world to understand, and it is clear from his performances that Mr Ellis is all untrained in the art of letters. One advantage he possesses: he knows to a hair the pedigree of his victim. But that is a doubtful advantage, and when the "exclusive information" is used as Mr Ellis uses it, it serves only to create prejudice, to cast a shadow upon the novelist's talent.

The great secret which Mr Ellis has to impart to the world is that Meredith's father was a tailor at Portsmouth, and that the Great Mel, who being dead yet overtops the living personages of *Evan Harrington*, was Meredith's grandfather. The secret was already shared by thousands before ever Mr Ellis put pen to paper. Readers of Marryat's novels might have been aware, if they chose, of the portentous truth, and being aware of it might have let it rest. Mr Ellis cannot let it rest. He turns it over and mumbles it with a kind of ghoulish interest. He leaves no irrelevant detail undiscussed. He presents us with a picture of the shop, and describes, with the air of one who has spared no research, the bow-windowed parlour in which the handsome daughters of Melchizedek Meredith were wont to sit, and tells us precisely how far the tailoring workshop extended towards the back.

And Mr Ellis, having set forth a vast deal of tittle-tattle, which in no way concerns the public, proceeds to lecture Meredith upon the sin of holding his tongue. "Whatever the causes that prompted Meredith's reticence on the subject of his origin," says the biographer, "he was singularly ill-advised in preserving that silence to the end." What nonsense! It was no part of Meredith's business to indulge the public curiosity. Why should he have obtruded the story of his birth and youth upon those who had never professed a great interest in him or his works, until he was taken up, as copy, by the journalists? The poet and novelist might

[1] George Meredith. His Life and Friends in Relation to his Work. By S. M. Ellis. London: Grant Richards, Ltd.

weave into the warp of his work as much or as little autobiography as he chose. He could not be asked to satisfy the craving for inapposite gossip of every Paul Pry who was at the pains to call upon him.

The truth is that Mr Ellis's book is a direct encouragement to the snobbishness which is always rampant in a democratic country. The democracy dislikes greatness of any kind, even while it marvels at it, and is never so happy as when it can belittle those who stand above it. In this act of belittling it shows neither justice nor consistency. If a man is of noble lineage, the democrat is down upon him at once, asserting that he must be judged only by what he is. On the other hand, he who makes his own name and fame is asked insolently whence he came, lest he reach too lofty a point of arrogance. He must not be allowed all the credit for what he has achieved, and if snobbishness can in any way besmirch him it will not lose the chance.

Suppose for a moment that Meredith had been the son of a duke. Had he breathed the horrid secret to the newspapers, he would have lain for ever under the democrat's ban. Under the ban he still lies, because he does not appear to have given out from his house-top the simple truth, equally inapposite, that he was a tailor's son. The natural result of Mr Ellis's book has been that more than one pious Radical, falling into the trap, has denounced Meredith for a snob, without perceiving that the charge recoils upon his own head. But, indeed, it is all a barren quest. Nothing that Mr Ellis tells us in his book adds to our real knowledge of Meredith. A poet is his own sufficient biographer, and we may find in Meredith's writings all the knowledge of the man himself which he chose to give us. Whatever he was, he was no snob. The child of romance, he had a perfect right to seek the place of his origin, if he would, among the hills of Wales. And Mr Ellis, by laying a foolish stress upon that which does not matter, proves himself an accomplice in the general conspiracy to misunderstand the novelist's works.

Moreover, Mr Ellis is at great trouble to explain the dignity of his own descent. Though his grandmother was a daughter of the great Melchizedek, he is linked to the shop only by the female line, and he tells us with pride that wherever England's need was sorest there was an Ellis ready to fight her battle for her. A noted crusader in the service of Richard I., a gallant soldier who served under Earl Warrenne against the Scots at Dunbar, a distinguished Cavalier who defended Rose Castle against the Parliament, a captain who fought at Oudenarde, and a commander who was at Quebec when Wolfe fell — these are some of his ancestors. It is plain, therefore, that he can look

upon his unfortunate cousinship without remorse. But why, oh why, in the name of all that is irrelevant, does he drag his own august pedigree into a life of George Meredith? He reminds me of a zealous cab-driver at Stratford-on-Avon, who having driven me to the house in which Shakespeare was born, presently pointed out to me with all the pride of a rival his own respectable birthplace.

Mr Ellis is not merely irrelevant. He treats his distinguished cousin sometimes with a kind of patronage, sometimes with an injustice, for which there is no excuse. He seems to think that a novelist is always on oath, that if he introduces a character from real life into fiction, he must not deviate a hair's-breadth from the literal facts. For instance, he assumes that Major Strike, in 'Evan Harrington,' was suggested by his grandfather, and is a definite and purposed libel upon that gentleman. "It may be pertinently asked," he says, "in what way Sir S. B. Ellis offended George Meredith that he should be the victim of such a bitter attack." Such a question may not be asked, even impertinently. A novelist chooses his personages as he will, and as his work demands, and therefore there is no attack at all. It was necessary to the story of Evan Harrington that Evan's sister Caroline should be ill-matched by a martinet of a husband. Whether she was or was not thus matched in life is wholly beside the point. And Mr Ellis, in imputing to Meredith a superfluous piece of spite, does little justice either to his victim's character or to his own intelligence.

These indiscretions are bad enough. It is bad enough also that Mr Ellis should drag painfully to the light Meredith's work done ungratefully and perforce for this journal or that. We have no right to judge an artist by articles which he has forgotten and suppressed. But Mr Ellis is far worse than indiscreet when he tries, after his clumsy fashion, to discuss the relations of Meredith with his first wife and with his son Arthur. Matters of such delicacy as this cannot but elude his understanding, and we have not the slightest warrant that the facts are as he states them. Who is he that he should explain Meredith's refusal to see his wife by a "horror of illness and the circumstances of death"? Who is he that he should grant to Meredith or withhold from him any excuse "in mitigation of censure"? Nor does his treatment of Meredith and his son Arthur show any finer tact. He blunders monstrously where good-feeling demands that he should walk warily, and attempts to atone for his necessary ignorance by a dogmatic statement of thoughts and sentiments, about which only two men, both of them dead, have any right to speak. Surely the supposed injury of Major Strike is magnificently avenged!

Mr E. B. Osborn's book, 'The New Elizabethans' (London: John Lane), is at once tragic and glorious. It commemorates a generation, wise, strong, and brave, which has sacrificed itself to the cause of England. Now that the war is over, we can count something of our cost with that sad tranquillity which peace has brought us. We know at last what we are asked to pay for victory. The generation is gone which would have shaped by its achievements and its counsel the world we live in. It is gone, with all its hopes and its courage and its understanding. It is not gone in vain, and, happily for us who are left, its high deeds are accomplished, and some at least of its songs are not unsung.

We knew but dimly what a treasure was ours before we lost it. Perhaps, had not the war interrupted our lightheartedness, we should never have known its real worth. With a noble, unconscious serenity these men left their books and their crafts and their sports, and in the glad spirit of youth went forth to save for their country the priceless gifts of happiness and security which they alone cannot enjoy. If we are saved by their sacrifice, the poorest return we can make is to keep their names enshrined always in our hearts, and to remember rather the glory and valour of their deeds than the tragedy of our loss.

Mr Osborn calls them the New Elizabethans, and truly they have many points in common with their ancestors of the sixteenth century. Like them, they were skilled in arts as in arms. Like them, they looked for the promise of their curiosity in all that life held of knowledge and adventure. Like them, they did not hold back an hour when their country asked their help. But nevertheless they were essentially modern Englishmen, who owed what they were and what they thought to the training which school and university had given them. They were, many of them, deeper in scholarship than the Elizabethans, and perhaps less inclined to ruffle it bombastically. In style, also, they were more modest than their forerunners. They wrote English with a finer economy of words, if with less force, and betrayed in their works a delicate self-conscious artistry of which many of the true Elizabethans were incapable. Walter Raleigh, great poet as he was, fashioned his verses as though his hand were more apt for sword than pen. These whom Mr Osborn calls the New Elizabethans went forth from their homes to fight the Germans with the happy nonchalance of poets. If we would find a name for them, I think it would befit them more closely to be called the New Athenians. As I read Mr Osborn's vivid sketches, as there was set before me the cheerful resolution of this heroic generation, the famous oration of Pericles came

to my mind, and I could not but draw the parallel once more between England and Athens on the one hand, between Germany and Sparta on the other. The strange resemblance which Prussia bears to Sparta need not be elaborated here. There is scarce a word in the funeral speech of Pericles which may not be truthfully applied to those who laid down their lives for England. "We have opened unto us by our courage"—thus spoke Pericles—"all seas and lands, and set up eternal monuments on all sides, both of the evil we have done to our enemies and the good we have done to our friends. Such is the city for which these men (thinking it no reason to lose it), valiantly fighting, have died."

Such as Athens was, England is to-day, and her sons went to battle with the same simplicity which Pericles celebrates. "They fled from shame," said he, "but with their bodies they stood out the battle; and so in a moment, whilst fortune inclineth neither way, left their lives not in fear but in opinion of victory." No less shall be said of our own brave men, and our esteem of them shall be as high as that exacted by Pericles of his countrymen who survived. "When the power of the city shall seem great to you," he said, "consider then that it was purchased by valiant men, and by men who knew their duty." And there is solace still in the noble words spoken by Pericles to those who mourned their sons: "Wherefore I will not so much bewail as comfort you the parents that are present of these men. For you know that whilst they lived they were obnoxious to manifold calamities, whereas, whilst you are in grief, they only are happy that die honourably, as these have done, to whom it hath been granted, not only to live in prosperity but to die in it."

Pericles thought that for famous men all the earth is a sepulchre, that their virtues should be testified not only by inscriptions in stone, but by the unwritten record of the mind. The record of the mind, if unwritten, is immortal, but we ask to-day the inscription in stone or on paper also. For they who saved their country shall remain for ever of a glorious example to others. The torch which they lit shall never be extinguished. It shall be kept alight and handed on to countless generations, a clear symbol that England, which has never lacked saviours, will not perish so long as her sons listen to her call, as they listened in 1914. Why did they obey the call? Because they were they, and England was England—that, I think, is answer enough. But some of them have analysed their motives, and Mr Robert Nichols, author of 'Ardours and Endurances,' has set forth the reasons why the undergraduates of Oxford heard the appeal to arms. Here they are: "A feeling that England's honour was not only imperilled, but would no longer

exist if we made our Belgian pact a mere 'scrap of paper'; sympathy with France; that genuine, but concealed desire, which exists in almost every youthful breast, to suffer for others; love of England; a vague and intense idealism . . . to be granted a high, immediate, realisable purpose; the pure spirit of adventure; curiosity; fear of the world's censure," and much else besides. No doubt all these motives helped to drive the young soldiers to the war; and yet, when we consider them, they are but variants of patriotism and adventure. Englishmen went out to fight the Germans, because they could not draw back, because without the slightest touch of arrogance they knew that they were wanted, and that was enough for them. And as the impulse was always the same, so they all accepted their duty in the same spirit of cheerful endurance. The gifts which go to the making of a soldier were already theirs. They seem to have been born with a sense of leadership. Never before was a system of education so splendidly justified as that which is given in our public schools and universities, and which is daily abused by the camp-followers of the Press. Between the training which Germany gave her sons before the war and that which England gave hers there is all the difference which separates efficiency from tolerance. "I think that tolerance is the larger virtue of the two," wrote Charles Sorley in a passage quoted by Mr Osborn, "and efficiency must be her servant. So I am quite glad to fight against this rebellious servant. In fact, I look at it this way. Suppose my platoon were the world. Then my platoon sergeant would represent efficiency, and I would represent tolerance. And I always take the sternest measures to keep my platoon sergeant in check! I fully appreciate the wisdom of the War Office when they put inefficient officers to rule sergeants. *Adsit omen.*"

That is perfectly true. Our "new Elizabethans" may have been inefficient technically when they first joined up, but they already possessed the qualities which cannot be achieved by art. They had learned how to obey, and could therefore exact obedience. They had mastered the discipline which enabled them to take whatever fell to their lot without flinching and in good temper. The custom of their public school, the freedom of their university, had taught them the two lessons—how to follow and how to lead—so that they came to the Army neither unready nor untrained. And many of them, trained to the same end, were trained also by the same road. In almost every page, as you read the slight records of their lives, you are reminded how much the writers of Greece and Rome meant to them. Of Julian and Billy Grenfell it is said that they "read Greek and Latin for the delight of it, and what they read became part of their very

being." If you would know what the classics meant to Charles Sorley, read his fragment upon Helen, quoted by Mr Osborn, and see how clearly he understood the simple truth, so often forgotten, that Homer's world was a world not of archæologists but of men. And this lore, this understanding, though despised by the prophets of second-rate efficiency, are by no means a bad equipment for a soldier.

"Being made perfect in a little while, he fulfilled long years." There is scarce one of those celebrated by Mr Osborn to whom these words would not apply, and the records of them are necessarily brief. They were making preparations for life rather than achieving life. They followed many callings, they displayed many talents. Harold Chapin the playwright, Wilding the tennis-player, Charles Sorley the poet, Dixon Scott a cloistered critic, Charles Lister, the Grenfells, Colwyn Philipps and his brother, Hugh and John Charlton, whose artistry is proved by their beautiful drawings, — they all had a right to look forward to happy lives, to the leading of their contemporaries whither they would by the exercise of their own proper gifts. What they would have done with their lives it is useless to hazard a guess. And yet of some of them the purpose and destiny were already revealed. Charles Sorley, for instance, could not have helped being a poet. Literature was in his blood and mind. He wrote with equal delicacy prose and verse. He was fast making his own style, his own method of criticism. He was discovering the truth of men and things as he went along. How wise was his comment upon the Germans in time of peace! "They have no idea beyond 'the State,'" he wrote, "and have put me off Socialism for the rest of my life. They are not the kind of people (as the Irish R.M. puts it) 'you would borrow half-a-crown from to get drunk with.'" And the war, no doubt, taught him even more of the German character than he had learned in peace. Truly he was gaining a wealth of experience for the future. Yet is he happier than some others. He fell at twenty years of age, and left behind him a sheaf of true poems unmarred by immaturity.

Charles Sorley was a poet, and in his craft above them all. Julian Grenfell and his brother Billy were scholars, and how much more besides! Mr Maurice Baring says of them: "Like Castor and Pollux they are together now, shining in some other place." While they shone on earth, they were thrice fortunate, in talent, friendship, and character. Of all those recorded by Mr Osborn, Julian Grenfell had, I think, the greatest mastery of life. To him all things seemed possible, and the joyousness wherewith he confronted whatever lay in his way, made sweet the bitterest experience. More closely than any of them he approached the Elizabethan ideal. He

was a fighter, with his fists or in the trenches, by habit and temperament. He was a natural poet, and there is in all that he wrote the force which may only be detected in the poetry of men of action. His verses were struck out of him, so to say, by an emotional blow. The poem, "In to Battle," could have been written only by a fighting man, and is secure of immortality. There is an exultation in every line of it, which it were hard to match:—

"The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
And with the trees to newer birth;
And find, when fighting shall be done,
Great rest, and fulness after dearth."

To Julian Grenfell death alone could bring cessation of fighting. Yet there was, of course, another side to his character. Hear what his brother Billy, with a fine recognition of his qualities, wrote about him: "You knew all the mysticism and idealism, and that strange streak of melancholy, which underlay Julian's war-whooping, sun-bathing, fearless exterior. I love to think he has attained that perfection and fulness of life for which he sought so untiringly. I seem to see him cheering me on in moments of stress here, with even more vivid power. There is no one whose victory over the grave can be more complete."

These are but a few of the brave men who found a nobler way in which to fulfil themselves than the pleasant paths of art and letters and sport. And they are but a few upon the edge of the long, long list. The names of others will come to every one's mind—names which will never be forgotten, and which cannot be too often celebrated. Of the right breed was Raymond Asquith, upon whom the kindly fairies had lavished all the gifts. He was a scholar, a wit, and a true artist in life. He was born into the world a natural aristocrat. There was about him an air of gay distinction which could elude nobody. And to him all things came easy — scholarship, a vivid understanding of modern literature, even the duller intricacies of the law. He could work hard without fussing, without being seen to work, and he was always ready to talk and to laugh. Nor were there many who could talk better or enter more willingly into the joys of companionship. What his future might have been is hard to say. Few of his friends could picture him immersed in the "intrigue and commonplace" of politics. Yet it is certain that in July 1914 he would have laughed the laugh of scorn at any one who had suggested that he should find a career in the Army. He was not a natural soldier, and even after he had served in France he smiled ironically at the incongruity, as he thought it, that he, a "middle-class, middle-aged" man, should be an officer in the Guards. He was as little "middle-aged" as he was

"middle-class"; and he proved, as his friends knew he would prove, a gallant and capable leader of men. With the rest of his kind, he refused to accept the kindly shelter of a staff appointment. He preferred to share the burden of the battle with his regiment, and fell fighting, like the brave soldier that he was.

Another who deserves a place among the New Elizabethans is Arthur Studd, who never heard a shot fired and knew not the hard discipline of the trenches. A painter of no small talent, he would have pursued his craft in peace and tranquillity of soul unto the end had not the war come upon us in 1914. Too old to trail a pike or shoulder a rifle, he chose for himself the heaviest task he could find at home. His brushes and his paints were instantly forgotten, and he set about gathering recruits in the unlikeliest places. It is characteristic of him that he chose for his work those counties which cared least and knew least about the war. And when the task of recruiting was over and done, he devoted his life to fighting disaffection and pacificism where he could find them. All unpractised in the art of speaking, he went resolutely into South Wales, combating the influence of the peacemongers wherever he could find it, making speeches at the street corner, and giving his life to the cause which he believed to be just. The strain and the toil wore him out; he came back to London, and died a soldier's death in as true a sense as if he had fallen upon the field of battle.

So long as England boasts such sons as these, she need fear neither enmity abroad nor treachery at home. And the more we read of those who fought our battle, the greater and juster cause have we for pride. Here, for instance, is General Sir F. Maurice's 'Forty Days in 1914' (London: Constable), which gives us the clearest account we have had hitherto of our contemptible little army, an account which we cannot read without a thrill. But it is not General Maurice's purpose to thrill his readers. He wishes them to understand how the Germans failed to reach Paris; how the French and the English managed to repel the attack, so long prepared for and so confidently launched. He shows us how the Germans lost the battle by too close a fidelity to the teaching of the great general staff. The one device of the Germans was envelopment. This was the doctrine which had been taught assiduously to their soldiers ever since the war of 1870. And it is happy for us that in their pedantry they had no doubt of the sovereign efficacy of their plan. "In that teaching," says General Maurice, "the German general staff of the present day has been brought up; but, fortunately for the world, the successors of the elder Moltke were not in 1914 of his calibre, and

though their plan was flexible and adaptable to the changes and chances of war, the idea of envelopment had become with them such a fetish that it was for a time at least regarded consciously or subconsciously as an end in itself rather than as a means to the one end of operations of war —the decisive defeat of the enemy." And so the stern, well-satisfied bigotry of Germany showed us the way to save the world.

With equal lucidity General Maurice describes the French plan, the German march through Belgium, the retreat from Mons, until he arrives at "the miracle of the Marne," of which miracle he gives the clearest explanation that yet has been seen. It is no part of his purpose to exaggerate the achievement of the British Army, but he does such justice as has been done nowhere else to the part played by the British Army in this glorious episode. He is convinced "that history will decide that it was the crossing of the Marne in the early hours of the 9th September by the British Army which turned the scale against von Kluck and saved Manoury at a time of crisis." And he gives good reason for his conviction. Many histories will be written of the war, and the final history will be read by none that is alive to-day. But in the meantime here is a story of forty days, which for vividness and vigour cannot be beaten, and which may confidently be commended to all our readers.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

THE STORY OF OUR SUBMARINES.—III.

BY KLAXON.

THE work of the submarines on the anti-submarine patrols, minelaying trips, &c., was useful, and at times exciting; but it must be remembered that the main duty of the flotillas lay in watching for the enemy's fleet, and that this duty continued throughout the war. Boats were stationed watching both the entrance to the Baltic and the several exits from the Bight right up to the date of the signing of the Armistice. For the first two years of the war the duty of these boats was to attack the enemy if seen, and to signal afterwards that the enemy had been met. The signalling question then was a secondary consideration. The boats were considered less as scouts than as torpedo-boats, especially in view of the fact that in the early part of the war their wireless range was limited. When "E 23" (Lieut.-Commander Turner) torpedoed the *Westfalen* in August 1916, he rose to the surface as the enemy drew out of sight and signalled the enemy's position to the Commander-in-Chief. It is true that no decisive result came of the signal, as the enemy turned home when barely clear of the Bight, and the Grand Fleet's attempt to cut him off, as usually happened, failed again; but that signal was the first clear "enemy report" given by a unit of the Bight Patrol. It was then that new long-range wireless sets were installed in all boats, amid the curses of the submarine officers, who at that date were distinctly narrow-minded on the question of how their boats could be most usefully employed. They looked upon it as a personal insult that their limited accommodation should be cut down by the extra instruments supplied, and also that (this was where the shoe pinched) their splendid independence on patrol should be lost to them now that their lordships could call them up direct from the wireless at Whitehall. But they soon discovered that the idea was right, and that their loss of independence weighed nothing against the new strategic use which had been found for the submarine as a fleet scout. Orders were issued that the boats were on no account to fire at the enemy if he was seen coming out, until a wireless signal had been made to Commander-in-Chief. This, of course, implied that the boat could not attack the outward-bound High Sea Fleet at all, as the signal would have to be made from surface trim, and by the time it was acknowledged the chance of a torpedo attack would have gone by. If the enemy was seen homeward

bound, the submarines were at liberty to fire at them; but outward-bound squadrons were safe from under-water attack. A submarine officer was heard to explain the reason for these orders by the light of his own logic: "The Commander-in-Chief won't let us fire at them coming out, because he wants 'em for himself, and thinks if we butt in it discourages them and they lose their enthusiasm; I suppose he's right, but it looks a bit selfish. . . ."

During the last two years of the war, the enemy gradually discovered that such orders as these must have been given. The Naval Armistice Commission to Germany has heard some interesting sidelights on the war from the officers of the German Commission. A good deal of the information volunteered has to be left unconfirmed owing to the lack of opportunities for checking it, but in cases where it can be corroborated by our own information, it can be seen that the Germans see no object now in concealment or perversion of facts. The following is from a German Commander, a dignified solemn-featured figure standing rigidly on the bridge of an Allied destroyer, his face turned to the bank of the Kiel Canal that slid past him—a man who felt clearly the disgrace and humiliation that had come upon his country:—

"We wondered why, when we made an excursion, we were not fired at. We knew you had submarines all round the Bight, and our ships even saw periscopes, but no torpedoes came. We thought after a while that it was an order,—that we were being watched and reported, but left unmolested till the Grand Fleet should come. I remember when we came out one night and we heard the wireless speak by Hiorn's Reef. The operator heard it, but we could not block the signals. If we had blocked we would have been yet found—our position would have been known by the Directional Wireless in England. We heard him sending by full power, and by the nature of his signal (it was so short and quick) we knew the purport of it. Then we went on, but all the time we knew it. We knew that we might meet the Fleet. It is impossible to leave the Bight without being reported. Then on the return by Hiorn's Reef the torpedo came and the *Moltke* was hit. She was badly damaged, but we towed her in. I do not know if it was the same submarine that saw us go out. I do not think so. You do not know? No? It was perhaps the same, but you had many boats patrolling. The Zeppelins claimed many to be sunk with bombs. It was not so? No? The flying men are all full of imagination. It is the vibration of the engines that affects the eyes. . . .

". . . Yes, I was at the Skagerakslaght (the Jutland Battle). We were not hit. Some ships were badly hit. One ship [probably the *Seydlitz*

—Author] had an artillery officer on board. It was his holiday, and he spent it on board her with his friend. He said after that he would prefer a year on the Western Front to twenty minutes' naval bombardment. The doctors were all killed and the ship was on fire. The shells came into both casualty stations. Did many English ships receive hits from torpedoes? The *Marlborough* only? That is strange, for we fired many. Yes, the Emperor said it was a victory, but if it had been a victory we would have known it without his having to tell us so. The sailors were not persuaded so. . . ."

(I seem to be quoting irrelevant matter here, but German mentality at any rate bears on the submarine subject, even if indirectly.)

". . . The *Tiger* is not sunk? No? We thought not—we heard later that it was a dummy *Tiger* that was torpedoed. We were sure before that it was the real ship that sank, and the officer that fired was decorated. It is all right, because since then he has earned the decoration for other things, so that he does not mind. A lot of things we did not understand for long. Our submarines have seen your K-boats at sea. They saw them through the periscope, and could read the numbers, but they said they must be fast submarine-hunters, like the Americans were written to be building. Then one day a U-boat saw through his periscope a K-boat steaming, and then in one minute the K was submerged, so we knew it was really a submarine. What was the submarine that torpedoed the U 51 in the mouth of the Jahde river? That was a fine attack. The U-boat was not yet out of the river on its voyage. Did the English boat get home? Yes. I am glad—she had many depth-charges to face. Your mine-laying submarines were dangerous. They had a trick of following our mine-sweeping boats up the channel. They did not lay mines until the channel was swept and reported free. It was well organised . . . and also the submarine that struck the mine and yet got back. The captain of her is to be congratulated; we heard of it and we thought she was very lucky—I think it was at Amrum bank she struck the mine. I think it was an English mine; one of our mines would have put her in pieces. I do not know why the Heligoland trawlers did not see her as she was passing home to England. . . ."

I must just hark back to the question of the U-boat here, as the Inspection Commissions in Germany that are seeing to the handing over or destruction of the U-boats bring back their reports here, and their reports are full of interest, though perhaps they contain little that is news to the Admiralty. There are now 135 German submarines in England, and there are more to come yet. The building-yards of Germany show that a huge effort was to have been made along the lines of submarine war in the spring and summer of

1919. Every available yard was working at full power at the date of the cessation of hostilities, and the work was almost entirely on submarine construction. The only other work being done was on new and more powerful destroyers and on standard merchant ships—the latter for after-the-war reconstruction. Yards that had never before done warship work of any kind were fully employed on building small submarines. The big yards were given all the new submarine-cruiser work to do. The submarine cruisers were a comparative failure on trials, as were also the big submarine mine-layers of the U-118 class; this must have been a sad disappointment to the enemy, as one can judge by the number of big boats preparing that he had set his heart on a campaign of thorough frightfulness on the American coast in the spring. Work on the new big surface ships had stopped in the spring of 1918, partly owing to the shortage of nickel and chiefly owing to their whole stake having been put on submarines and not on the Fleet. The German mentality never seems to have grasped the fundamental rule of sea-fighting—that commerce-destruction will never win a war, and that only the defeat or mastery of the main enemy fleet can bring command of the sea.

Such yards as the two at Hamburg (Vulcan and Blohm & Voss) are typical of the method of construction. On November 11 these two yards had seventy-two submarines under construction. At the same time at Blohm & Voss's yard the battle-cruiser *Mackensen* lay abandoned in the water just as she had been launched in the spring of 1918, and the battleship *Ersatz Worth* lay half-finished on the building-slip. The submarines were on the slips in rows—each row representing a group of perhaps seven boats of the same class. Lying alongside each row were parts and fittings waiting to be built in: for instance, seven bows (complete with sterns and torpedo-tube pads), seven sterns (complete with hydroplane-guards, &c,), seven bow top-strakes, seven stern top-strakes, &c.—in fact, one was reminded strongly of what one had heard of American motor-car factories. The whole idea was of quick and standardised production, and the two points that occurred at once to the observer were—"There would have been a deuce of a rush of new stuff into commission in the spring," and then, "How on earth were they going to provide skilled crews for such a lot of boats all at once?"

The latter question is still difficult to answer, even if one takes into account a system of "compulsory volunteering," and also the fact that standardised boats can be worked by standardised and partly-trained men. What it would have come to was indicated by the trend of U-boat war results in 1918. It would have implied a good deal of real work being performed by a few experienced and trained crews, and a lot of blank trips and half-hearted

performances by a mass of other crews, the mortality among the latter rising to a terrible percentage. It will always be the same; a good personnel will do well in any boat—a bad personnel will do badly, however good the boat is.

In the remarks quoted from a German officer, I have referred to three incidents in connection with the activities of our own submarines. I will give them in their order, as they appeared to the officers concerned. It was "E 42" (Lieutenant C. Allen) that met the German battle-cruisers on the 25th April 1918, and, the enemy being homeward bound, fired a torpedo into the *Moltke* as she passed Hiorn's Reef:—

"A.M. 0630. While on surface, sighted hostile seaplane—high up, but close.

"Dived to 60 feet (4 bombs). Surfaced for observations. Saw smoke bearing N.E. Dived.

"Sighted a battle-cruiser escorted by three torpedo-boats. Altered course, and proceeded utmost speed to attack. Fired starboard bow tube (quarter shot). Range 2000-2500 yards. Heard sound of explosion a long way off—possible hit."

(The "possible hit," as a matter of fact, caused the *Moltke* to be towed in a very precarious condition all the way home.)

"About 5 depth-charges and 20 lance-bombs were dropped at me after the shot. Courses as requisite for getting clear."

The next incident, of the attack in the Weser river, has a story behind it.

Lieut. Varley ("H 5") reports as follows:—

"11th July 1916: Fixed by Terschelling Light. Proceeded towards Ems." (At this moment "H 5," being bored with the patrol billet assigned to her, and thirsting for trouble, left her patrol to see what was going on in Germany—Author.)

"12th July, 2 A.M.: Dived off Borkum. 10.25 P.M.: dived to avoid destroyer. 10.50: surface, proceeding east, sighted enemy patrol vessel, but steamed round her without being seen.

"13th July, 1 A.M.: Sighted Wangeroog and Rote Land Lights. 9.58 P.M.: sighted destroyer about 2 miles N.W. from Aussen Jahde Lightship.

"14th July, 12.34 A.M.: Dived—several destroyers of G 101 class in sight. Attacked same. 10 A.M.: sighted hostile submarine—attacked same. Torpedoed submarine with one torpedo amidship. Surface to look for survivors. Was put down immediately by destroyer, who opened fire. 10.41: altered course N., and went to bottom in 18 fathoms. Heard loud explosion. Destroyers sweeping for us all day.

"During my attack there was just enough sea to make depth-keeping difficult. I fired two torpedoes, allowing 10 knots speed. One torpedo hit just before conning-tower.

"Previous to this, on the 12th, the periscope had become very stiff to turn, and would not lower as far as the jumping-wire. During dark hours I endeavoured to rectify same, but while doing so was forced to dive, and so lost all the tools and parts of the centre bush, which left the periscope in the same condition throughout the trip. While attacking, it took two men besides myself to turn the periscope. For this reason I did not think it advisable to attack the destroyers after having sunk the submarine. After torpedoing submarine, I proceeded four miles north, and lay on the bottom in 18 fathoms. Many vessels were heard in close proximity. Several explosions, one very heavy one. On one occasion a sweep-wire scraped the whole length of the boat along the port side, and a vessel was heard to pass directly overhead.

"I very much regret to report my slight transgression from orders. . . ."

The Navy, however, takes no cognisance of zeal, if misplaced. There is a story of a sailor of the Napoleonic wars who took a fort from the French single-handed. The resultant row with his Commanding Officer, who had been waiting some hours with all his men drawn up in order to carry out that identical duty in due military form, caused him to remark that "He'd never take another fort for them as long as he lived." The captain of the *Maidstone*, as is the way of the Service, shielded his subordinate from the wrath of My Lords, who were naturally aghast at an officer having left his assigned patrol area; but having taken the responsibility for the fault of his bull-terrier, he proceeded to lay into him thoroughly himself, while commenting publicly as follows:—

"Lieutenant Varley is a very able and gallant submarine officer, and although there is no possible excuse for his having disregarded his orders and proceeded to the Weser, it is submitted that his skilful and successful attack on the German submarine, in spite of a defective periscope, and his subsequent conduct, especially during the critical time when he was being swept for by destroyers with explosive sweeps, may be taken into consideration."

It was, however, a year before Lieutenant Varley was decorated for this action, My Lords deciding that after that interval the example he had created would be forgotten.

I have mentioned the question of our own boats' experiences of depth-charges. A few instances of both English and German anti-submarine straffing may be of interest. At the beginning of the war the German depth-charge was a thing of contempt, and its English counterpart was nearly as useless. Submarines were sunk in those days by what might be called "accidental" methods. The boat either made a mistake and was then rammed or destroyed by gunfire, or else it met a mine or ran into nets. Depth-charges were not big enough to be dangerous, and it was not realised that even a big depth-charge must explode very close to the boat's hull before actual damage is caused. Moral effect is, of course, a different thing: there is a case of a U-boat surrendering as a result of one rivet having been knocked out of her hull by a comparatively distant explosion. That, of course, is a matter of personnel; and the depth-charges we used often had a remarkable effect, although no structural damage whatever had been caused by them. When our big depth-charges were first supplied, patrol boats and destroyers carried but few of them and were expected to be sparing in their use—in fact, they were not supposed to use them unless a fair chance was seen of an almost direct hit. Later, in 1917, the supply exceeded the demand—at least the demand on the previous scale—and anti-submarine vessels were supplied with just as many as they could comfortably stow on their decks;

while orders were issued that any patch of water in which there was the faintest possibility or suspicion of a U-boat being present was to be sprinkled with depth-charges until there was no possibility of anything intact remaining in range. It is a feature of life in submarines that one always gives the hunters credit for seeing more than they do see: one watches a Zeppelin through the periscope—a Zeppelin cruising at perhaps five miles' range away—and one feels a sort of shrinking and an inclination to slip down to ninety feet or so for a spell in the certainty that one's periscope must have been seen. Of course it hasn't, and it probably won't be. One meets a dark shape at night, and one does a "crash dive" at once, heaving a sigh of relief as one sees the gauge show sixty feet. One forgets that a submarine, besides being a much smaller mark to see at night, keeps in all probability a far better look-out than any other class of vessel. In the same way, the explosion of a depth-charge usually sounds closer than it is, and the submarine officer is inclined to jump to the conclusion that it is directly aimed at him or at some indication of his wake. As a matter of fact it is more probably aimed at an oil-patch or a piece of drift-wood some half-mile off, and the ship dropping it has no real knowledge of the submarine's proximity at all.

One German U-boat officer stated that in his last five trips he had heard an average of 150 charges per trip exploded in his vicinity. It is probable that only a small percentage of these were dropped on clear knowledge of his presence. Being an officer of good morale this profusion had not worried him, but with a less experienced captain some direct results would probably have been gained.

In the notes taken from the conversation of the German officers, the case of the English boat that met a mine at Amrum Bank is mentioned. The case provides a good illustration of what a direct hit, even by a full-sized mine, will *not* do, when the morale of officers and men is of the ideal standard, which every submarine service tries to obtain. (I keep referring to "English boats"; in this case I mean by that that the captain was Canadian, and most of the rest of the crew Scotch or Colonial.) The report is written by the captain of the *Maidstone*.

"Submarine 'H 8 (Lieut.-Commander B. L. Johnson, R.N.R.), when diving at 60 ft. off Ameland Gat on March 22, 1916—heard a slight scraping noise forward, which was followed by a violent explosion. The submarine immediately sank by the bows and struck the bottom at 85 ft. with an inclination of 25° or 30°. . . . The captain reports that although it appeared obvious to all that the boat was lost, the officers and entire crew proceeded to their stations without any signs of excitement, and all orders were carried out promptly and correctly. I would submit that such conduct, in the face of apparent certain death, is an example of which the whole Service may be proud.

"Motors were put to full speed

astern, and Nos. 2 and 3 ballast-tanks were blown—No. 1 being found open to the sea. The submarine then came to the surface. Fuel was then blown, and after some temporary repairs had been made course was shaped for Terschelling, and then Harwich.

"The damage to 'H 8' is serious, the mine having exploded against the starboard forward hydroplane. Both forward hydroplanes and the bow-cap are gone; the upper part of the hull in that vicinity as well as both starboard torpedo-tubes are wrecked. All bulkheads appear to be strained, but luckily the one near the rear of the torpedo-tubes, although leaking, did not give way. . . ."

This boat came out of the Bight and back to Harwich at slow speed on the surface and with a large part of her forward buoyancy destroyed. The luck that watches over the competent took her back unmolested by the enemy There is a case where the run back of a damaged boat was performed over a yet greater distance through enemy waters.

On the 21st June 1915 submarine "S 1 (Lieut.-Commander Kellett) was ten miles north of Heligoland. She dived during the day on several occasions, owing to sighting one Zeppelin, one seaplane, nineteen trawlers (sweeping in lines), and she also attacked, fired at, and missed a destroyer. Her port engine then broke down completely. On the 22nd, by Hiorn's Reef Light vessel, she sighted a Zeppelin and a Parseval. She worked on engine defects all day while diving.

On the 23rd the starboard engine broke down completely, and she continued to work on defects. A Zeppelin was in sight nearly all day. On the 24th she captured the German trawler *Ost*. She put a prize crew of five hands with Lieutenant Kennedy on board, passed a tow-rope over, and started back to Yarmouth. On the 25th the trawler's engine broke down. "S 1's" crew refitted the HP piston, crossheads and crankhead bearings, and at four knots speed the strange procession proceeded on out of the Bight. On the 26th they stopped to refit the trawler's L.P. cylinder (they must have been by this time thoroughly sick and tired of engines and all to do with them), and proceeded. On the 27th June they made a triumphant arrival.

There seems to be a special providence that watches over people who won't admit defeat. I don't know about faith moving mountains, but (I'm sorry to have to use the word, but my vocabulary is limited) it was "guts" that brought "H 8" and "S 1" home safely.

Getting back to the question of depth-charges—one may pass over the little explosive sweep-charges used by the Germans early in the war. They were more like squibs than anything else. The Zeppelin bombs were noisy, but burst on the surface only, and so were innocuous to a boat below 30 or 40 feet depth. Later on, in 1917, the Germans began to use depth-charges in their destroyers and patrol boats; but these weapons were not only too light for useful results to be

expected from them, but were also dropped too vaguely and inaccurately for our boats to have much respect for them.

I will quote some recent cases which refer to the best depth-charges the enemy produced during the war:—

"Midnight, Oct. 2nd, 1918; 'L 15' (Lieut.-Commander Ward): Vessel, apparently T.B.D., appeared suddenly on port beam, distant 100 yards. Dived to 60 feet. Vessel passed overhead (turbine engine). Heard two loud explosions in quick succession."

"7.45 A.M., March 24th, 1918; 'E 44' (Lieut. Venning): Five battleships (apparently of *Kaiser* class) and a destroyer (the latter zigzagging). Turned to attack on surface. The destroyer turned towards me and fired a white Very's light. His range was about 2000 and the big ships 4000 yards. All ships then altered course. 7.50 A.M.: dived at full speed. Hit bottom hard at 64 feet, and proceeded along bottom at full speed. 7.53: one depth-charge exploded astern. 7.55: another depth-charge exploded astern. I stopped engines. 8.5 A.M.: went ahead 6 knots. 8.10: destroyer passed overhead, and the sweep-wire was heard scraping over the 'jumping wire.' 9.30 A.M.: eased to four knots. Sounds of propellers died away. Under-water explosions were heard at intervals till 11 A.M."

If this chance had been given, in such shoal water, to a British destroyer screen, the submarine would certainly not have been so calm about it.

There are some first-hand reports on our own depth-charges:—

Submarine "D 7," February 10th, 1918 (Lieut. Tweedy), suddenly sighted H.M.S. *Pelican* through her periscope. She increased to full speed and went down deeper, altering course from north to west.

"3.48 P.M.: First explosion occurred, loud and violent, but no damage or inconvenience. Very shortly afterwards a second explosion. This was considerably more violent, shattering several lights and flooding the after-periscope. Heavy shock throughout the boat, but no serious damage. Order was given to 'blow externals.' While rising, a third explosion occurred of about the same intensity as the first. On breaking surface made recognition signals. . . ."

The comment of authority on the incident blandly points out that by more accurate judging of speeds, distances, &c., the estimated distance of 150 yards between "D 7" and the second depth-charge could have been much reduced and better results obtained. There is, of course, no hint that the destroyer was to blame in the matter of recognition. In all these cases it is the destroyer's duty to take it for granted that any periscope is hostile, and the comments on these reports usually show some sympathy with the surface ship's natural disappointment at finding she has attacked one of her own side.

On 29th Feb. 1918, submarine "L 2" (Lieut.-Commander Acworth) had a similar experience, which had very little that was amusing about it. Her opponents were the United States' destroyers *Paulding*, *Davis*, and *Trippe*.

". . . I lowered periscope and dived to 90 feet. Gun-shots being heard, I proceeded at full speed to 200 feet, at which depth the first heavy depth-charge exploded, and at the same time the after-hydroplanes jammed hard-up. We now took a tremendous inclination by the stern, the tail touching bottom at 300 feet.

"Four more very heavy explosions

shook the boat. Bright flashes were seen in the boat, and she was at an angle of 45°, bow up. We were unable to correct this trim with the forward hydroplanes, so I gave the order to blow Nos. 5 and 6. This order was promptly obeyed, and the boat slowly commenced to rise, but at a tremendous angle. On breaking surface three destroyers opened a hot fire on us at a range of 1000 yards—one shot striking the pressure-hull just abaft the conning-tower. Recognition signals were made, and White Ensign waved, when firing ceased."

The American destroyers had sighted the top of the conning-tower of "L 2" as she "broke surface," diving in the rough swell. The submarine authorities comment on the incident as follows: "In view of the small amount of conning-tower exposed and the distance at which it was sighted, it is submitted that these vessels made a most remarkably efficient attack."

It is curious that both British and German submarine officers have the same opinion of aircraft as anti-submarine weapons. Our boats looked on Zeppelins as scouts only—as bombers they could be practically neglected. The German seaplanes became dangerous towards the end of the war from the fact that they carried machine-guns: their bombs were trifling affairs. But any aircraft might locate a boat on patrol, and then the boat might just as well not be there, because no target worth a torpedo would be foolish enough to come within range of her, once the warning had been given. Similarly, the Germans stated that what they disliked most in the Irish Sea area were the airships and seaplanes that were always passing over them. They did not fear the bombs these craft carried, but they did dislike having their own position continually reported to the surface patrols, who, as a result, gave them little rest. There is no doubt that the morale of submarine personnel is much affected by continual nerve-strain. For a man to be able to keep up a long patrol and retain his full faculties he must have some part of the day or night free from worry, even if it is only a couple of hours during which he may feel safe from aggression. In the Heligoland Bight it was a tremendous relief to be able, at the end of a harassing day, to sink to the bottom and retire from the war for a few hours. The sense of relief and relaxation was extraordinarily grateful. It must be remembered that, even if nothing is in sight through the periscope, the officers and crew have still at the back of their minds the recollection of the number of boats which have been lost, presumably by mines, in the Bight, and of whose fate no explanation has ever been forthcoming. If a submarine can be given no rest, day or night, from the ever-present fear of death, she is soon in a state when over-tired nerves will infallibly commit some mistake which will make her an easier victim. In this connection aircraft may be described as an infernal nuisance. You never can be certain if they have seen you or not, and the

tendency is to take it for granted that they have done so. If you are then in enemy waters you must be on the *qui vive* for being hunted by the usual methods; if not in actual enemy local waters, you feel that your chance of a target has gone for the day, and that even if a target does come by, she will be well protected and on the look-out for periscopes. On the whole, however, the German aircraft did not do much, and they certainly did not make the British submarines nervous. The game, in fact, rather worked the other way, as far as the Zeppelins were concerned. It was easy to work out (the German being of a methodical and regular nature), from the continued reports by our boats of the times and rendezvous of Zeppelin patrols, just where a Zeppelin might be expected to be found, and the resultant action by our own aircraft brought two of these huge sea-scouts down in flames. It should be mentioned that our boats are supplied with "sky-searcher" periscopes, which can either sweep the horizon or swivel so as to watch the motions of anything from the horizontal plane up to the zenith. A seaplane is a different proposition. Submarine "C 25" was attacked by five German seaplanes off Harwich on 6th July 1918. Several thousand rounds of machine-gun ammunition were fired at her and a number of bombs dropped. The bombs, even when they hit direct, did very little damage, being of probably not more than 10 lb. weight. The incendiary bullets from the machine-guns, however, killed the captain (Lieutenant Bell) and five men, who from a position on the bridge were trying to drive off the enemy with a Lewis gun. As the incident occurred close to the English coast, the success of the enemy on this occasion may be put down to the fact that the submarine, under the impression that the aircraft must be friendly, made no attempt to dive until the bursting of a couple of bombs on her hull rendered her incapable of submerging.

Seaplanes have the advantage of attack in that they are able, on sighting a submarine on the surface, to come down volplane from the clouds, the first intimation of their presence being given by the roar of their engines as they level off close overhead. Submarine "E 4" was nearly caught in this way once near Hiorn's Reef. She had just come to the surface for a look round and to get latitude observations. Lieut.-Commander Tenison, her captain, was sitting comfortably on the bridge-rail while the tanks were being blown below in order to give the boat convenient buoyancy. The seaplane had dived down on him in the path of the sun, and the *rip r.r.rip-room* of the switched-on engines 200 yards away brought Tenison to his feet with a jump. He realised instantly that there was no time to get under before the enemy could let go his bombs—the change from blowing to flooding tanks would take far more than the usual 30 seconds

which suffices to submerge a boat under normal conditions. He reached down, pressed the button of the "diving-hooter," and then stood up and enthusiastically waved his cap to the seaplane pilot. The pilot shot past at a few yards' range, giving a half-hearted wave in return, as a man responds to a perfect stranger who salutes him in the street. As the machine passed, Tenison jumped down below and pulled the lid to: the short delay had been enough for the blows to be shut off and the vents to be thrown open, and the boat was starting under. Through the periscope, before the hull was down, he saw the machine turn ahead of him, coming round on a wing-tip, and evidently now fully awake to the situation. The boat drove under, and at eighteen feet three bombs burst on the surface in quick succession over the forepart of the hull. Being the usual small bombs no damage was done, but had they struck the hull while it was still above water the chances for "E 4" would have been poor. It is quite possible that the German pilot has not to this day seen anything amusing in the incident.

Although Zeppelins did not, as far as is known, cause our submarines any damage by bombing or other aggressive action, they were a great nuisance, in that they often caused delay to the boats on passage to their areas. One had to dive in order to avoid being reported; and it was aggravating to be kept under by a great silver brute which appeared to have nothing better to do than to cruise aimlessly round in a five-mile circle overhead. It was therefore a great relief when a chance occurred for a boat to get her own back and square accounts a little. On the 9th May 1916, at 9.30 A.M., "E 31" (Lieut.-Commander Fielman) observed a Zeppelin in difficulties, apparently sinking towards the water. The airship was "L 7," which had been under fire, and had received damage from our light-cruiser forces. She settled down till the gondolas touched, and started to "taxi" towards home. "E 31" rose ahead of her and opened fire with a bow gun. On the third hit the Zeppelin burst into flames, and disappeared in thirty seconds or so. Seven survivors were picked up, and "E 31" dived again and proceeded on towards Harwich. At midnight a German four-funnelled cruiser was seen coming right at them, and barely 200 yards away on the starboard bow. Lieutenant Love, R.N.R., officer of the watch, acted swiftly. He put the helm hard a-starboard and rang the diving alarm. The cruiser was pretty smart in her actions also. She ported her helm to ram; but "E 31," being inside her turning circle, was missed by fifty yards. As she passed, she switched on searchlights and opened "independent fire" (i.e., "fire as fast as you can and as often as possible at whatever you can see of the target"). One 5·9 shell hit the submarine's forward upper structure two

feet above the hull, but did not explode. As the gauge reached sixty feet, "E 31" heard the cruiser pass overhead. It is understood that the seven Zeppelin prisoners observed, as the boat levelled off at the bottom to wait for quieter times overhead, that it was a rotten war anyway, and that they would be glad when it was over.

One thing which the submarine service in war-time seems to engender, is extraordinary impudence towards the enemy. This state of mind is based partly on contempt and partly on complete confidence in one's crew and boat. At the beginning of the war it was a marked feature in the work of our boats; but later on, when the watching patrol was established, things had to be taken more seriously, because it was inadvisable for the presence of boats in the patrol areas to be known of by the enemy. There are several instances which will illustrate the mental attitude of our officers towards their foes before the patrol-ring was formally established round the Bight. I would instance "E 5" (Lieutenant-Commander Benning), who, on the 16th August 1915, seeing a German destroyer about four miles off, near the mouth of the Elbe, came to the surface and opened the conning-tower hatch "to attract her." The attraction was apparently sufficient, as the destroyer charged at full speed. "E 5" dived, turned outwards, and then, swinging in again, fired a torpedo as the enemy rushed past. The destroyer, the sea being very smooth, saw the firing-splash, and, by putting her helm hard a-port, dodged the torpedo. She then ceased to be "attracted," and departed hurriedly.

The island of Heligoland has been a wonderful source of inspiration to the newspapers throughout the war. It has been described as being the strategic pivot of the North Sea, and as the heavily-fortified base of the High Sea Fleet. The importance of the place may be better gauged if it is explained that it has just about the fighting value that an old battleship would have if moored out head and stern on the shoal, but with the disadvantage of the guns being unable to obtain "all-round" training. The harbour has only enough depth of water for trawlers and torpedo-boats; the High Sea Fleet couldn't get in if it wished to. If we had had possession of it instead of the enemy, we would have lost heavily in trying to keep it. Our position there would have been rather as if the Germans had tried to hold the Shipwash Light vessel off Harwich; it would have been too exciting for words. At any rate Heligoland is not a submarine base, and as long as there are far better bases on the mainland, it is not likely to be used for that purpose. I have heard it stated that U-boats use the island as an "advanced port" which allowed them to shorten their journeys out on patrol. Such use of the island would shorten a voyage by some thirty miles,

but when the voyage implies a mileage of perhaps 6000, a matter of thirty is hardly worth noticing. From our submarines point of view the place was useful to take bearings of and to fix position on, and except for navigational purposes they took little interest in it,—so little, in fact, that "E 2" (Lieut.-Commander Stocks), when she ran aground there, barely referred to the incident in her log. Submarines are delightful things to navigate in. A surface ship has a certain fixed draught, and she has to keep that figure always before her mind's eye. A submarine never approaches the coast or navigates in thick weather, unless trimmed down until she is drawing several feet more than usual. When in this condition a meeting with the shore does not matter much. If she slides up on the land, she blows her tanks and slides off again, so that grounding in a submarine comes to be looked on as a very ordinary and matter-of-fact sort of business. "E 2" was cruising in a fog in the Bight, and was trimmed down in case of accidents, when she came well on to the beach under the western cliffs of Heligoland,—she was so close to the gun-emplacement that the guns could not be depressed enough to bear on her, which was certainly fortunate. The Germans were very agitated. They ran about, hailing and bellowing at her and working themselves up to a great state of mind. "E 2," however, blew her tanks out and backed off; as she did so a torpedo-boat arrived and opened fire on her. "E 2," finding salvos falling close aboard of her, decided that there was hardly time to turn round and depart submerged in the usual way, so she continued to go astern, and, reversing the hydroplanes, dived off backwards—none of the shots hitting her; and, in fact, the accurate estimation of deflection by the torpedo-boat, in view of "E 2's" squid-like action, must have been difficult.

A matter that caused a good deal of amusement to our submarine service throughout the war, and which probably made the Germans laugh also, was the great "petrol myth." It is a story which is at least as good as the Russian troops that travelled through England. Every part of the coast was reported to be the scene of mysterious rendezvous between U-boats and German spies, and at these meetings petrol cans changed hands—the U-boats taking the full tins, and the spy, presumably, insisting on getting the empty tins back, or else the sum of two shillings each in lieu. Heaven knows who invented the story, but it sounds like a "leg-pull," which had got out of hand and spread like a disease. For one thing, submarines don't use petrol—they use Diesel engines and heavy oil. For another thing, a submarine, depending on her size, carries from 30 to 300 tons of fuel in her tanks. If a wicked German spy was kind enough to take a couple of tins of petrol aboard a U-boat,

he would, presuming that the captain owned a motor bicycle, be gladly welcomed; but his gift would hardly add to the radius of action of the boat. A submarine can keep the sea longer than a surface ship can, and has a much longer radius of action—the heavy-oil engine is economical and efficient, and such things as special fuel-carrying tenders or submerged fuel-tanks are unnecessary luxuries. It is true that U-boats used on occasions the little creeks and bays of Scotland and the Orkneys to shelter in, and in fact one boat landed some men on one of the smaller Orkney islands and stole half a dozen sheep; but such exploits are more matters of amusement than business. Our boats in the Bight used to shoot duck occasionally (and the Frisian Islands are a paradise for wild-fowl shooters in January—the birds are to be seen in thousands at a time), and if there had been anything else worth stealing on the very uninviting and ugly German coast, I'm certain that nothing but the innate honesty of our submarine officers would have prevented them from getting it.

As for the German spy scares, the Germans had a similar experience at the beginning of the war. Quite a number of perfectly good Huns were shot by enthusiastic amateur sentries, and the patriotic citizen felt it a duty to let off what firearms he had at any car which drove fast after dark, or which showed strong lights. The rumours of communication between U-boats and spies on the coasts of Great Britain continued throughout the war, while all the time the real German spies continued to send their reports by letters, and the N.I.D. continued to open the letters and substitute their own versions of the news. The fact is, very little information got away to Germany except through the newspapers. This country has the disadvantage, from an enemy spy's point of view, of being an island; Germany has a neutral country on each side of her: as a result, when the Armistice came, the Germans could give us little news about their Navy,—everything of interest about it was already known at our Admiralty. There were some other widely believed "facts" about submarines which are dying a very slow death. They mostly came from the brains of the Press naval correspondents. One was that a submarine could not keep the sea more than a day or two. Of course, long before the war, even our little C-class boats were spending ten days at sea on manœuvres. The first long trip of the war was "E 11's" thirty-one days in the Sea of Marmora. Again, it was solemnly proved when the *Hogue*, *Cressy*, and *Aboukir* were sunk, that more than one U-boat must have been present, "as a submarine cannot reload under water." I am mentioning these things, as it has been a matter of surprise to the submarine services of all navies that the boats have been looked on as new arrivals, and as weapons which were completely new

and untried in 1914. The fact is, the submarine "arrived" long before the war, and has been used in annual manœuvres in our Navy since 1904. The first successful submarine attack, it should be noted, was by the Confederate submersible which sank the *Housatonic* in the American Civil War—some fifty-seven years ago.

There is no doubt that the German submarine service had everything in its favour. They had targets in plenty, in view of the fact that our fleet kept the sea practically continuously at the beginning of the war, and for about 25 per cent of the time during the later stages. The coasts of these islands are ideal for submarines to work round; the shore is mostly steep-to, and the high landmarks make navigation easy. The German coast is low and difficult to see; it is guarded by outlying shoals and islands, and the visibility off-shore is usually poor; the numerous rivers emptying into the Bight make diving conditions bad at times owing to the alternate strata formed of fresh and salt water. Altogether, the two sets of conditions used to make our submarine service often wish that the two belligerent navies might change fleets, bases, and strategic problems, and so give our boats a chance to show how a weaker navy should carry out a war of attrition. Such a war could undoubtedly have been fought very much more efficiently by the enemy if he had concentrated on warship-targets only. There is a clause in a German instructional book for submarine officers which directs the young idea to "never attack a man-of-war if there is chance of usefully attacking commerce" (or words to that effect). That sort of order is an admission of defeat, as although the axiom, that "the object of strategy is the defeat of the main forces of the enemy," was, I believe, laid down by Napoleon, it is as old as the time of the first battle between tribes of Palæolithic men. A defeat of the Grand Fleet by direct naval action would have given Germany domination of the world; but the works of the late Admiral Mahan do not seem to have been understood in Berlin.

The great German commerce-destroying submarine navy is now no more. Its fate will be a reminder to strategists of the future that a *guerre de course* never won a war yet, and that there is no easy road to victory. It may be easier "to attack merchant ships than men-of-war," but if the result is the surrender of one's own Navy, the policy seems hardly profitable.

However, our own submarine strategy was, in spite of the enemy's example, kept on correct lines; our leaders saw the possibilities and the future of this type of craft far more clearly than did Admiral Tirpitz. Our boats were built and used for military purposes only, and their work was all part of the main strategical policy of the Navy.

MUSINGS WITHOUT METHOD.

DOLES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED—£1000 A YEAR AND ONE ROOM!—OUR NEW PHILISTINES—MATTHEW ARNOLD ON "DEMOCRACY"—A MIDDLE-CLASS UNION.

At the beginning of the war extravagance was the penalty paid of necessity to years of inaction. A state which refuses to prepare for a catastrophe, which its leaders know to be imminent, cannot hope at the outset to obtain more than a florin's worth for the expenditure of a pound. But if the eyes of England are not opened now, she will totter in blindness unto the end of time. The first duty of her Government is to practise economy boldly and unflinchingly. And what does the Government do? It exhausts such ingenuity as it possesses in wasting millions as though they were dross. Nor can we withhold our admiration from the cleverness wherewith it has discovered oceans, seas, rivers, and puddles, into which it can fling the nation's gold. He had a spark of talent who determined that high explosives should still be made and then incontinently blown to the four winds of heaven. See what this exquisite plan accomplished! It gave employment to thousands of men and women, who would rather have taken wages for doing nothing! It got rid swiftly and painlessly of many hundreds of thousands of pounds, and it imparted a genial pink glow to the sky. Only one error can we detect in the method of its carrying out. Four o'clock, the hour chosen for the sacrifice, was far too early. The pink illumination would have been far more brilliant and more widely visible a few hours later.

The member of the Government who suggested this conflagration was plainly a man of talent. He pales to insignificance before the hero who contrived the payment of the unemployed. Here, in truth, was a stroke of real genius. Two things only were important for us, that we should save money and increase production, and by one movement of the pen we were given an inexhaustible outlet for wasted gold, and a ready means of bringing to a sudden and a happy end the industry of the land. No man, or woman either, is such a fool as to work when he, or she, is amply paid for doing nothing.

So the recklessness of our spendthrifts is happily expressed in the slang of the moment. There are "silver queues," it is said, outside all the labour exchanges, formed by men and women who have no desire to find work, and who find that a soft bed is the best place for labouring humanity. Men are wanted in every centre of industry. There is work for women to be found in hospitals, laundries, and in servantless households. What does our richly endowed

people reck of necessity? It has more than enough for ease and comfort, and it says to itself with perfect reason, "he is a fool to soil his hands with labour if he can live like a gentleman for nothing."

What is given without thought is spent without benefit. The men and women of England are becoming as careless in the management of money as the Government itself. They rejoice to think that their rulers are driving them fast down the inclined plane of Bolshevism. All students who deign to attend courses at the University of Moscow are henceforth to be paid for their trouble, and why should the boys and girls of England go unrewarded if they are willing to subject their poor brains to the stress of instruction? And yet, if we consider the question with the cold eye of reason, we shall see that all the money wasted is wasted in vain. None but the politician, who delights to bribe with public money, profits by it. Crime is said to proceed from poverty and unemployment. There is no poverty now since unemployment became lucrative, and there has never been a time in which theft, idleness, and disturbance in the street were more grossly popular. "I have had an extraordinary number of young girls before me," said a London magistrate the other day, "who formerly worked on munitions, and who are now charged with using insulting language in the streets." These young ladies find that out-of-work pay gives them just the support they need to ply their profession of accosting strangers at the street corner. The men vie with the women in wealth and lawlessness. A labourer, run-in not long since for being "drunk and disorderly," had in his possession "seven one pound notes, fifteen ten shilling notes, £1, 13s. 6d. in silver, 1s. 8½d. in bronze, two foreign coins, two pocket-knives, a pipe-lighter, a purse, a spring weighing-machine, a pouch of tobacco, two boxes of matches, seven keys, eleven herrings, and one pound of sausages." It sounds like the Arabian Nights, doesn't it? And yet this man, with the solid wealth of Golconda packed about, prefers no doubt to live in idleness, refuses to pay income-tax or to educate his children, and drags the tears of pity down Mr Smillie's honest, weather-beaten cheek!

Our hearts are wrung daily, and perhaps inappositely, by the bitter cry of the workers for comfortable houses. If we clear our minds of cant and forget the mock-heroics of the labour leader, who has a natural love of melodrama, we shall come to the conclusion that if the workers demanded (or wanted) better houses, better houses would be theirs. The despised middle class, which is far worse off than many of the workers, refuse to inhabit hovels. It has a clean, keen sense of life, and it is ready to forgo much if only it may live with cleanliness and dignity. The working class, eaten up by pity and by the flattery of politicians, whose sole prin-

ciple is numbers, clamours for palaces and will not pay for them. Here is a recent case: A woman who opposed an ejection order in February, admitted that her rent was no higher than 6s. a week, and that it had not been paid since November. And her husband earned £7 a week! Thousands of officers in the Army and Navy, thousands of bank clerks, thousands of Government servants, earn far less than that. Yet they would refuse to be satisfied with a lodging which cost them no more than 6s. a week, and they would know the pang of disgrace if their rent was six months in arrear. And what shall we say of another case which came a few weeks ago before a London court? A young wife sought a separation from her husband; they had no children; they admitted that they made between them £1000 a year; and so little good did their income bring them that they were content to occupy one room at a cost of a few shillings a week! Plainly, then, the large sums which our spendthrifts lavish upon the people avail nothing to raise the standard of comfort and of life. The recipients of the ill-bestowed bounty refuse to learn the proper lessons of conduct, and the worst of it is that the wealth heedlessly given to them is stolen by the judicial robbery of taxation from those who, were they not stripped to keep the loafers in affluence, would know well how to profit by every penny of their earnings which the State permitted them to keep.

The vast outlay does not purchase thrift or honesty. High wages are no check upon idleness or upon theft. Here, for instance, is a workman caught stealing a few tools of trifling value, the property of the Government. That habit rather than necessity prompted the crime is proved by the fact that the thief was paid £360 a year, and should have been sufficiently well provided with the world's goods to live honestly. Nor does the sense of responsibility seem to increase with the increase of wages. The father of a mentally deficient girl was recently invited to contribute something towards the cost of keeping her in an asylum. He objected fiercely to what seemed to him an interference with personal liberty. At first he declared that he could contribute nothing, and presently offered 1s. 6d. a week under protest. Yet this benevolent father was forced to admit upon oath that he received in wages and gratuities £276 a year, and that his wife, also mentally deficient, was supported by the country and cost him not a penny piece!

Not long since a woman complained that her husband lay in bed all day and refused to work. The magistrate whose advice she sought bade inquiries to be made. The man, sure enough, was found lying idly in bed, perfectly well and able to work if he chose. The argument which he advanced in his own defence is unanswerable. He was drawing, said he, a war pension of £2 a week; his indolence was

worth to him 29s. a week, unemployment pay; and so long as he was handsomely endowed for doing nothing, he did not see why he should trouble to work. Nor do we. We do see that the Government, which, by its wanton and deliberate extravagance, is demoralising every man, every woman, every child who will accept its doles, will presently be asked to pay a very heavy bill of ignominy and shame.

The spirit of independence, which once was the pride of Englishmen, is being utterly extinguished. The working class, arithmetically powerful, is flattered and cossetted, until it believes itself to be sacredly endowed. Worse still, in the very moment that it demands all the wealth and power of the State, it refuses to carry the common burdens of life. Its children are fed and taught at the public expense. It refuses, successfully, to pay income-tax, and the Trade Disputes Act has placed it beyond the reach of the law. To one thing only will it condescend — to the art of governance, of which it knows nothing.

And let it be remembered that labour, as represented by its fiercest leaders, is frankly egoistic. It cares not for the comfort or wellbeing of any other class. It boasts that it can destroy the prosperity of the whole land. It recognises the existence of no other class than its own, and pretends to believe that all who do not work with their hands are mere idle parasites. The truth, amply demonstrated by the war, that all great deeds depend upon leadership, makes no impression upon its cast-iron mind. The flatterers of the people, never disinterested, have proclaimed aloud, in defiance of the plain facts, that the war was won by the working classes, and these classes refuse to understand that, had the task of beating the Germans been left to them, our shores would have been invaded and devastated before the end of 1914.

What is the motive, then, which drives the Government to distribute vast doles, and to submit to every new demand of the working class? The motive is fear, and fear is allayed by the usual method of paying hush-money. It is by this a commonplace that popular government is firmly established upon intrigue and blackmail. Thus the country is asked to suffer for the terror or infirmity of its governors. They throw the miserable and peaceful part of the community to the wolves. This is not the first time that a single party in the State has been debauched by interested politicians. During the great part of the Victorian era the lower middle class was supreme in this country. A greater share of power than should have belonged to it was put into its hands by the Reform Act of 1832, and the praise of such "tribunes" as John Bright and Richard Cobden persuaded it to believe that it engrossed all the virtues and all the graces. It was

omnipotent and omniscient, even its vices erred on the side of virtue. When its leaders sanded the sugar and watered the milk before they held family prayers, the fraud was smiled upon indulgently because it was all in the way of business. Indeed, it confused its religion with its politics so ingeniously, that none could say where the religion ended and the politics began. There was scarce a chapel in the country that was not also a candidate's committee-room. The monstrous injustice, which gave undeserved privileges to one party, met with an inevitable result. The middle class, once set upon a pinnacle, was depressed to the depths of shame. Its members were jeered at as Philistines, and its name became a synonym of moral and intellectual mediocrity. And all because it listened too complacently to the voice of the flatterer! To-day Labour (with a large L) is following the same primrose path, and if it be as careful it will find itself enveloped also in the flames of the everlasting bonfire.

Its leaders are doing it the same disservice as was done to the middle class by John Bright and others. Its false prophets are befogging its mind with promises, which will never be realised. Its members are told that they and they only are the elect. When the great "democracy" first began to feel its strength, Matthew Arnold, the wisest political philosopher of his time, saw plainly how it would all end. He shows us how Mr Bright, who had "a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class Liberalism and the world of democracy," and whose belief in machinery was unshaken, complained of people who appeared to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise. "He leads his disciples to believe," says Matthew Arnold, "what the Englishman is always too ready to believe, that the having the vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature." The world has not changed since Mr Bright misled the people: rather the eloquence which drove large audiences to their undoing is to-day tenfold intensified. Our demagogues still proclaim, but in a far louder voice, that the franchise is the panacea of all human woes. Or else Mr Bright calls out to the democracy, says Matthew Arnold: "See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labours what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world."

Not even Mr Lloyd George at Limehouse went beyond these

burning words in praise of the democracy. And what is Matthew Arnold's just comment? "Why," says he, "this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr Roebuck or Mr Lowe debauch the minds of the middle classes and make such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he *is*, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed or the bigness of the tabernacle he has built." And Matthew Arnold, understanding clearly the folly of the demagogues, who deceived the people by their flatteries, saw with equal clarity what would be the end of the false speaking. "But," said he, "teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can come from them."

The truth of Matthew Arnold's words is at last firmly established. The working classes, the Philistines of to-day, have superseded the middle class, but they sit down to the banquet of the present without having on a wedding garment, and, unless they change completely, truly nothing excellent can be expected from them. It is not wholly their fault. They have listened to the charmer, and have put faith in his sugared speech. They have been told, from a thousand platforms, that they alone are the State, and they are coming, in their ill-omened arrogance, to believe themselves gifted above all other men. It is a pity, because, unless they look upon life with the eyes of truth, they will ruin the country, which, to their thinking, does not matter at all; they will ruin themselves also, and than that they can conceive no heavier disaster. The worst is that, though they refuse to govern, to feed, and to educate their own families, they aspire to the sole governance of the Empire with no better excuse than numerousness. Now a great Empire cannot be governed by sectarians of any kind, and until the working classes learn first that they are but one party in a complex state, and that no good can come out of mere Philistinism, they will assuredly destroy themselves, and may, unless their untrained ambition be checked, destroy the Empire also. The British Empire is made up of all sorts and conditions of men, and of these sorts and conditions not one is indispensable, but all. When Mr Roebuck and Mr Lowe said the middle-class Liberals had made England great by their energy, self-reliance, and capital; or when Mr Bright told the democracy what its members had done with their hands and sinews, they were all three speaking only a small bit of the truth. England has been made great by co-operation,

and the rarest qualities of all are not blind energy or strong sinews, but brains and the spirit of leadership. If the working classes want an open proof of this obvious statement, let them take over any enterprise they choose and show the world how long they can postpone the inevitable bankruptcy.

These things must be said because the working classes, encouraged by demagogues, appear to believe themselves fit without effort to scale the highest pinnacle of glory. Yet they have many lessons of restraint, modesty, and self-reliance to learn before they can be trusted even to help in controlling the life of our Empire. They must discover for themselves that the ruling of a great country and large wages are not one and the same thing. And in making this discovery no Government will find it profitable to help them. They must also find out the supreme value of discipline, and understand that years of training are necessary for the proper conduct of affairs. They must not listen to those who tell them that nothing is wanted for the exercise of the governing art but a loud voice and a handful of prejudices. Indeed, the best hope of the working classes lies in failure. They must be purged in the fire of experience, and prove to themselves in the school of hardship that flattery is a poor substitute for truth.

Nor does the inquiry which has been held into the state of the coal industry give us much encouragement for the future. What was wanted was an array of facts upon which a wise conclusion might be based, and we got from Mr Smillie, for instance, little else save the stale expression of class animosity. For him property seems theft, and all the discomforts of the miners the deliberate contrivance of the mine-owners. He did not condescend to ask plain questions. He preferred to declaim and to shout irrelevancies. Nor does he see that in demanding that the miners should have all things done for them, as though they were children—that, for instance, they should be *compelled* to take baths at the pithead—he is asserting their complete unfitness for responsibility and the management of life. And yet, as we know well, he would claim for them the sole right to govern the country. The stuff of which Mr Smillie and his like are compounded is partly rhetoric, partly ill-temper. If they had their way untrammelled, they would lead us to anarchy, to what in these days is known as Bolshevism, which means injustice for everybody and a class war.

The truth is that the working classes want to win, whatever happens. They demand that they should be subsidised, and also that they should rule those who pay the subsidies. They are as brutally cynical in exacting whatever they want from the State, as were the middle-class Liberals, such as Messrs Bright and Cobden, in declaring that they would be ruined if the hours

spent by children of twelve in the factories were shortened. Sixty years ago middle-class Liberalism was resolved to exploit the "democracy," as it was called, for its own special benefit. To-day "democracy" has made up its mind to exploit all the upper and middle classes to save itself the trouble of educating its own children or of submitting to the payment of income-tax. And the "democracy," Philistine also, sees as little as did its predecessor in Philistinism, that no community can prosper in which all parties do not work harmoniously together.

Economically, the class war has already begun, and Labour, unscrupulously egoist, has struck the first blow. Its demand for free education, unemployment benefit, constant doles, and immunity from direct taxation, means that it seeks to purchase an easy life with somebody else's money. If Labour has its way, the upper and middle classes, which assume all the burdens of civic responsibility, which educate their own children, see that they are decently housed, though many of them are worse paid than the working classes, and pay such taxes as are demanded of them by the State, will sink beneath the unmerited burden. The working classes' lack of pride and independence will weigh with special heaviness upon the lower-middle class, which, for all the selfish Philistinism it showed in the past, was always self-supporting and did not stoop to beg.

"Bear ye one another's burdens" is a noble maxim. It is flouted by Labour, which says to the classes above it: "Bear our burdens as well as your own." And if we yielded to Labour's despotic clamour, then there would be an end, as we have said, of the middle classes. They would be gradually extinguished by harsh processes of taxation. Those who, in the pride of their heart, have accepted help from nobody, would no longer be able to conduct their own lives with comfort and dignity, as they have done hitherto. Compelled to educate the children of others, they would perforce leave their own sons and daughters, in whose more fertile minds the seeds of learning fall most fruitfully, without any schooling whatever. But, happily, we shall not sink under this new tyranny. If there is to be class war, it shall not be fought on one side only. The middle classes, including not only the narrow-minded liberalism of the mid-Victorian age, which believed that the salvation of the world lay in the "dissidence of dissent," but manufacturers also, and men of all the intelligent professions, will know how to defend themselves against plunder and oppression. They will use all the weapons, such as boycott and obstruction, which our debased system of politics places in their hands. And they will win, as justly they deserve to win, because they have better brains and a finer understanding of the arts of life than their foes.

What is wanted, then, is a

middle-class union which shall guard the interests and defend the property of its members—a union which shall dissociate itself from the sectarian middle class, the puppet of Manchester, whose ideal never rose higher than a full breeches pocket. That middle class and its grasping egoism died a welcome death when Mr Asquith and his friends were beaten at the polls. The middle class, which we would see united, is, as we have said, far wider in its interests and less selfish in its policy than the mob which supported John Bright of old and Messrs Asquith and Runciman but yesterday. And its first duty will be the defence of its own rights. It has no desire to take anything from the profit or happiness of others. At the same time, it will refuse to be robbed for the exclusive advantage of the tyrants who pretend to believe that the working man should engross all the privileges and evade most of the duties of life.

The middle-class union will be asked to watch with a scrupulous vigilance the fair exaction of the income-tax. It is not to be tolerated that this burdensome tax should fall but partially upon the shoulders of the manual workers. If citizenship be worth having it is worth paying for, and Labour, when it is liable to taxation, must not be permitted to evade its liability. The small investor is not asked to pay the State its due. That due is taken at the source, and it is the small investor's business to recover what he can, when he is charged at too high a rate. And there is no reason why the contribution of Labour should not be levied in the same manner. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, to increase his party's popularity in the constituencies, excuses Labour from doing its duty, will deserve no pity at the hands of the middle-class union. If one party refuses to pay what is asked of it, then all others should do their utmost to impede the collection of an unjust and partial tax. What we have a right to demand is a fair field for all, and no favour for the man who works with his hands. Thus should we see that justice is done, and a stern check put upon wanton extravagance. For one thing is clear, that the money which is being wasted to-day is largely spent in keeping the working classes in good temper. If a share of the taxation is borne by Labour, then Labour will scan with a more careful eye the public expenditure. It will be less amiable to wild schemes of education, if it be asked to pay even a fraction of the cost. And if only the middle-class union does its work with discretion and restraint, we may yet see a contented country, wherein all men bear their part faithfully, according to their ability, wherein harmonious co-operation will supersede the bitter warfare of class, beloved of self-seeking demagogues.

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